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### MY YOUTHFUL DAYS.

BY FLORA THORNE.

My dear youthful days, they are passing away,
Like roses, too fair, of a bright summer day;
And the soft, golden light of my hope's sweetest dream,
Is vanishing now, like the sunset's faint gleam.

The fresh, early morn of that once happy day,
When joyous I chanted my favorite lay,
With sweet warbling choirs of the pure ether sky,
That hovered around, or so blithe flitted by;

When lawns and green hedges, I roamed with delight,
From morn's rosy dawn till the fading of light;
And there chased the birds and the butterflies gay,
'Mong wild-flowers and shrubs where they gambol and play.

When love's wildest dream, I had painted so fair,
I deemed, nor Time's wing, nor dull sorrow nor care,
Its colors' deep hue, could erase from my sight,
Nor earth's tainted touch its fond image could blight.

That once happy day, ay, alas! it has fled;
Its pictures, so bright, they are mourned with the dead;
And evening's cool zephyr repeats the sweet lay,
My dear youthful days, they are passing away.

NEW YORK, April, 1856.

# THE GUN MAKER OF MOSCOW;

OR,

# VALDIMIR THE MONK.

### A TALE OF THE EMPIRE UNDER PETER THE GREAT.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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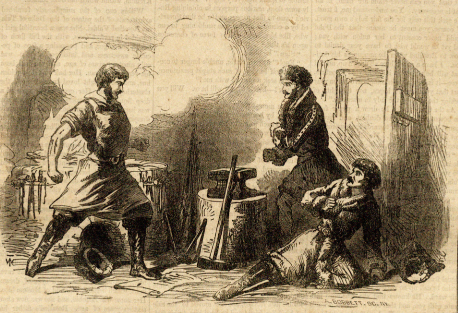
A. BOBBETT. SC. NY.

RURIC NEVEL, THE GUN-MAKER, DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST THE ATTACK OF COUNT DAMONOFF AND STEPHEN URZEN.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE GUN-MAKER AND THE MONK.

The time at which we open our story is mid-winter, and towards the close of the seventeenth century. Russia had passed through the long and bitter ordeal of national Night. The Tartar yoke had been worn till the very bones of the nation were galled; and when this was thrown off civil dissensions and insurrections commenced. The Poles and Swedes plundered the country, and amid general tumult and confusion some half dozen men were clamoring for the throne. At length a few patriotic citizens, pledging everything they held dear on earth to the cause of freedom from this curse of anarchy, and headed by a noble prince and an humble, patriotic butcher, made a bold stand to save the country. Moscow was retaken, and MICHAEL ROMANOFF was chosen Czar;—and this illustrious family still occupies the imperial throne. And now the day of Russian greatness dawned; but the sun was not fairly up—the broad light opened not upon the empire—until Peter came to the throne.

In the department of the Sloboda—the suburbs of Moscow—and very near the river Moskwa, stood an humble cot, the exterior of which betrayed a neatness of arrangement and show of taste that more than made up for its smallness of size. Nor was it so very small, in fact, but only in contrast; for near at hand about it stood many large, shabby, dirty-looking structures that overlooked the prim cot, as bleak mountains may look down upon a verdant hill. And within this cot was as neat as without. The two apartments in front, one of which was only used in winter, were furnished not only with neatness, but with a fair show of ornament and luxury. Back of these were a large cooking and dining-room, and two small bedrooms; and back still from these was an artisan's shop, and other out-buildings. This shop was devoted to the manufacture of fire-arms, mostly. Some swords, and other edged weapons, were made here upon special application.

The gun-maker now stood by his forge, watching the white smoke as it curled up towards the throat of the chimney. He was a young man, not over three-and-twenty, and possessed a frame of more than ordinary symmetry and muscular development. He was not large—not above a medium size—but a single glance at the swelling chest, the broad shoulders, and the sinewy ridges of the bare arms, told at once that he was master of great physical power. His features were regular, yet strongly marked, and eminently handsome; his brow, which was full and high, was half covered by the light brown curls that waved over it; while his eyes, which were of a bright, brilliant, deep grey in color, lent a cast of genius to the intellect of the brow. His name was Ruric Nevel. His father had been killed in the then late war with the Turks, and the son, leaving his mother with a sufficiency of sustenance, went to Spain soon after the bereavement. There he found work in the most noted armories; and now, well versed in the trade, he had returned to his native city to follow his calling, and support his mother.

Near by stood a boy—Paul Peepoff—a bright, intelligent lad, some fifteen years of age, who had bound himself to the gun-maker for the purpose of learning the art. His hair, and his eyes were darker than his master's, and if he possessed not so much sound intellect, he did surely possess an unwonted degree of keen, quick wit, and a principle of unswerving integrity.

The sun had been some time below the horizon, and the only light of any consequence that made things partially visible within the shop came from the dull blaze of the coals on the forge, as Paul ever and anon bore down upon the brake that moved the bellows. Suddenly Ruric started back from the forge as his mind broke from the deep reverie into which he had fallen, and having bade his boy to see that matters were all properly disposed for the night, he turned towards the door, and was soon in the kitchen, where his mother had supper all prepared and set out.

Claudia Nevel was a noble looking woman, if the impress of a noble generous soul can be called such, and the light of her still handsome countenance was never brighter than when gazing upon her boy. She had seen the snows of fifty winters, and if they had left some silver upon her head, and some age-marks upon her face, the sunshine of full as many summers had left her with a thankful, loving heart, and a prayerful, hopeful soul.

"It is snowing again, faster than ever," remarked Paul, as he took his seat at the table.

"Ah," returned Ruric, resting his knife a few moments while he bent his ear to listen to the voice of the storm, "I had hoped 'twould snow no more for the present. The snow is deep enough now. And how it blows!"

"Never mind," spoke the dame, in a trustful, easy tone, "it must storm when it listeth, and we can only thank God that we have shelter, and pray for those who have none."

"Amen!" responded Ruric, fervently.

After this the trio remained some minutes silent, seeming to be busy in listening to the storm-notes that came pealing about the cot. The wind was high, and the snow now came dashing upon the windows with a dreary, melancholy sound. The meal was at length eaten, and the table set back, and shortly afterwards Paul retired to his bed. It was his wont to retire early, for he rose early to build the fires and prepare for the labors of the day.

Ruric drew his chair close up to the fire-place, and leaning against the jam he bowed his head and pondered again. This had become a habit with him of late. Sometimes he would sit thus during a whole hour without speaking, or even moving, and his mother did not interrupt him, as she supposed he might be solving some mechanical problem that had arisen to bother him. But these fits of thought had become too frequent, too lengthy, and too moody, for such a hypothesis, and the good woman was forced to believe that they were caused by something more remote than the business of the forge or the lathe. The youth now sat with his brow resting upon his hand, and his eyes bent upon the hearth. For half an hour he had not moved, and his face wore an anxious, troubled look.

"Ruric, my son," spoke the mother at length, in a low, kind tone, "what is it that occupies your thoughts so much?

The young man started and turned his gaze upon his mother.

"Did you speak to me, my mother?" he asked, after having recalled his mind to things about him.

"Yes, my boy," she said. "I did speak to you. I asked you what it was that occupied your thoughts."

"O—nothing—nothing," Ruric answered, after some moments of hesitation. "I was only thinking—that was all."

"I know you were thinking— and I know that was all at the time; but of what, Ruric? Come—hide no secrets from your mother. I have noticed you of late, and I know you are changed. That old smile is gone from your face, and sometimes I have feared the gladness was gone from your heart. I have seen you bent in thought over your work when I knew that of your work you were not thinking; and I have seen you buried in deep pondering when you should be reading or conversing with me."

"Have I then offended you, my mother?"

"No, no,—O, no, my noble boy. Never did such a thought enter my mind. If I have been made uneasy thereby it was only in love for thee, and the fear that thou wert not so happy as in the past. Will you not tell me all? Oh, I hope my boy fears not to trust his mother with his thoughts."

As she spoke she thus moved her seat close to where Ruric sat, and placed her hand upon his arm.

"Tell me, my boy," she added, in a low, persuasive tone, "what it is that dwells thus upon your mind."

Ruric reached out and took his mother's hand, and having gazed for some moments into her face he said,—

"Surely, my mother, I have nothing in my soul that I would hide from thee. If I have kept this thing of thought to myself with unseemly silence it has been because I feared you would laugh at me if I told you of it."

"Ah, no, my son," the mother replied, almost reprovingly; "nothing that could claim such deep and absorbing consideration from a mind like yours would move me with derision. Speak plainly, and be sure of my sympathy."

A few moments more the youth gazed silently upon his mother, and then he answered,—

"All this thought has been of one person—of—of—Rosalind Valdai."

Claudia Nevel started as she heard that name, and for the while the color forsook her cheeks.

"What, my dear boy— what of her have you thought?" she asked, tremulously.

"What, but of one thing, could I think, my mother? You have seen her?"

"Yes, Ruric."

"And you have marked the grace—the loveliness—the soul-given beauty of the noble girl?"

"I know she is beautiful, my son; and also, that she is good,—at least, so I think."

"Then what but love could move me with deep thought of her? Oh, my mother, I do love her. I love her with the whole strength of of my heart and soul."

"Alas, my Ruric, she will never dare love thee."

"You know not that," the youth quickly replied, his eyes burning deeply, and his open brow flushing. "Did I not know she loved me be sure I would never have allowed my thoughts such range. We were children together, and even then we loved. Fate has dealt differently by us in the years that have passed since those childhood times; but yet I am sure her love for me is not changed, save as increasing age must change all the emotions of our natures into deeper, stronger lights and shades."

"But think, my boy: You, a mere artizan—she the offspring of nobility and the ward of a Duke—a stern, cold, proud aristocrat, who looks upon our station only as harsh masters look upon their beasts of burden. I fear you will find little else but misery in such a course of thought."

"At least, my mother, I will see Rosalind; and if she loves me as I love her—and if she would accept my hand—"

"Hush, my boy. Do not cherish such hopes. Why should she mate with thee when the richest nobles of the land would kneel for her hand."

"Hold," cried Ruric, starting to his feet—his handsome face flushed, and his bright eye burning. "Speak not thus,—at least, not now. I flatter not myself, but I claim a soul as pure, and a heart as noble, as any man in the land. My mind is as clear; my hopes as high; my ambition as true to real greatness, and my will as firm, as any of them. If Rosalind seeks the love of a true heart, and the protection of stout arms and determined success, then I fear not to place myself by the side of any suitor in the land. But if she seeks immediate wealth, and the glitter of some high-sounding title, then—Ah, I know she does not. But let it pass now. I will see her."

Claudia would not oppose the wishes of her son, and she said no more upon the subject. For a while nothing further was said, until Ruric remarked upon the increasing force of the storm.

"Hark!" uttered his mother, bending her ear in a listening attitude. "Was that a knock upon our door?"

"Surely no one is out on such a night that could seek shelter here," returned Ruric. "You must have—"

The youth did not finish the sentence, for at that moment the knock came so loud that it was not to be mistaken. The youth caught up the candle and hastened to the door. He opened it, but the blast came roaring in, whirling a cloud of snow into Ruric's face, and extinguishing the light at once.

"Is there any one here?" the gun-maker asked, bowing his head and shielding his eyes from the driving snow with one hand.

"Yes," returned a voice from the Stygian darkness. "In God's name let me in, or I shall perish."

"Then follow quickly," said Ruric. "Here—give me your hand.—There—now come."

The youth found the thickly gloved hand—gloved with the softest fur—and having led the invisible applicant into the hall he closed the door, and then led the way to the kitchen. As soon as the candle was relighted Ruric turned and gazed upon the new-comer. It was a monk—and habited something like one of the Black monks of St. Michael. He was of medium height, and posessed a rotundity of person which was comical to behold. He was fat and unwieldy, and waddled about with laughable steps. His huge black robe, which reached from his chin to his toes, was secured about the waist with a sash of the same color, and the snow, which lay upon the shoulders and back, presented a striking contrast. Ruric brushed away the snow with his own hand, and having taken his visitor's thick fur bonnet the latter took a seat near the fire.

Before a word was spoken the youthful host carefully examined his guest's features; and the latter seemed equally desirous of discovering what manner of people he had fallen in with. The monk's face was a peculiar one. The features were very dark and prominent, and almost angular in their strongly marked outlines. His brow was very fair in mental development, and his eyes were dark and brilliant. The slight circle of hair that escaped from beneath the tight skull-cap which he retained upon his head was somewhat tinged with silver, though his face did not betray such advanced age as this silvery hair would seem to indicate.

"You have been caught in a severe storm, good father," said the youth, after his guest had somewhat recovered from the effects of the cold.

"Aye—that have I, my son," the monk returned, in a deep, rumbling tone. "I left the Kremlin this morning, little thinking of such a change. This storm has commenced since I started on my return. About half a mile from here my horse got foundered in the snow, and I left him with an honest peasant, and then started to make the rest of my way on foot; but I reckoned wildly. The driving storm blinded me, and the piling drifts swallowed me up at every dozen steps. My body is not very well adapted to such work.—Ha, ha, ha. But I saw your light, and I determined to seek shelter here for the night. By St. Michael, but this is a most severe storm; yet you are comfortable here."

"Aye father,—we try to be comfortable," said Ruric. "My mother could hardly survive a winter in some of the dwellings which stand hereabouts."

The monk made no answer to this, save a sort of commendatory nod; and shortly afterwards the youth asked,—

"Do you belong here in the city, good father?"

"Aye—at present I do," the monk returned. And then, with a smile, he added,—"I suppose you would like to know whom you have thus received. My name is Valdimir, and my home is wherever I may chance to be on God's heritage. At present I am residing here in Moscow. There—could you ask me to be more frank?"

Ruric smiled, but he made no direct reply. He was too deeply interested in the face of the monk to enter with much eagerness into conversation. At length the guest asked if he could be accommodated with some sleeping-place, and having answered in the affirmative the youth lighted another candle and conducted him to a chamber which was located directly over the kitchen, and which was very well warmed by means of several iron tubes that connected with the furnace below.

"Mother," uttered Ruric, as soon as he had returned to the kitchen, "who is that man?"

"How should I know?" the woman replied.

"But have you never seen him before?" Ruric asked, in an earneſt, eager tone.

"I cannot tell, my son. His face most surely calls up some strange emotions in my mind, but I think I never saw him before."

"And yet he seems familiar to me," the son resumed. "Those eyes I surely have seen before, but to save my soul I cannot remember when nor where."

And so Ruric pondered and pondered, but to no avail. After he had retired to his bed he lay awake and thought of the strange face; and all through the night his dreams were but startling visions of the Black Monk.

## CHAPTER II.

### A STRANGE PROCEEDING.

When Ruric came down in the morning he found the monk already there, and breakfast nearly ready. But little was said during the meal time, for the monk seemed busy with thoughts of his own, and Ruric was too much engaged in studying the strange man's features, and pondering upon the various doubts and surmises that had entered his mind. After the meal was over the monk accompanied the gun-maker to his shop, and there he spent some time in examining the quaint articles of machinery that were used in the manufacture of arms.

Ruric was engaged in finishing a pair of pistols, and for some minutes the monk had stood silently by his side watching his movements. At length the youth stopped in his work and laid the pistol down.

"Excuse me, good father," he said, rather nervously, at the same time gazing his visitor in the face; "but I must ask you a question. Where have I seen you before?"

"How should I know?" the monk returned, with a smile.

"Why—" resumed Ruric, with some hesitancy, "I knew not but that you might enlighten me. I have surely seen you somewhere."

"And are there not hundreds whom you have seen in this great city—aye, thousands—whom you might recognize as you recognize me?"

"Ah—it may be so; but not like this. There may be a thousand faces I would recollect to have seen, but not one of them would excite even a passing emotion in my soul. But your face calls up some powerful emotion—some startling memory of the past—which bothers me. Who are you, good father? What are you? Where have we met before? Was it in Spain?

"No," said Valdimir, with a shake of the head. And then with a more serious shade upon his face, he added—"Let this pass now. I will not deny to you that there may be some grounds for your strange fancies; but I assure you most sacredly that until last night I never came in direct companionship with you before; —at any rate, not to my knowledge. You have acted the Good Samaritan towards me, and I hope I may sometime return the favor."

"No, no," quickly responded the youth, "If you return it then it will be a favor no more. I have only done for you what every man should do to his neighbor; and so far from needing thanks for my services, I would rather give them for the occasion, for I know of no source of joy so pure and uncontaminated as that feeling in the soul which tells us we have done a good act."

The dark monk reached forth and took the youthful artisan's hand, and with more than ordinary emotion he said:

"You touch the harp-strings of the soul with a noble hand, my son, and if any deed of kindness can give me joy it will be a deed for you. We may meet again, and until then I can only say, God bless and prosper thee."

With these words the monk turned away, and ere Ruric could command presence of mind enough to follow him he had gone from the house. The youth wished to say something, but amid the varied emotions that went leaping through his mind he could gather no connected thoughts.

After the monk was gone Ruric returned to to his bench and resumed his work. He asked his boy if he had ever seen the strange man before, but Paul only shook his head, and answered dubiously.

"What do you mean?" the gun-maker asked, gazing the boy in the face. "Do you think you have seen him before?"

"I cannot tell, my master. I may have seen him before, and I may not. But surely you would not suppose that my memory would serve you better than your own."

Ruric was not fully assured by this answer. He gazed into Paul's face, and he fancied he detected some show of intelligence there which had not been spoken. But he resolved to ask no more questions at present. He had asked enough, he thought, upon such a subject, and he made up his mind to bother himself no more about it, feeling sure that if his boy knew anything which would be for his master's interest to know it would be communicated in due season. So he applied himself anew to his work, and at noon the pistols were finished.

Towards the middle of the afternoon, just as Ruric had finished tempering some parts of a gun-lock, the back door of his shop was opened, and two men entered. They were young men, dressed in costly furs, and both of them stout and good-looking. The gun-maker recognized them as the Count Conrad Damonoff and his friend Stephen Urzen.

"I think I speak with Ruric Nevel," said the Count, moving forward.

"You do," returned Ruric, not at all surprised by the visit, since people of all classes were in the habit of calling at his place to order arms.

The Count turned a shade paler than before, and his nether lip trembled; but Ruric thought that might be the result of coming from the cold into a warm place. However, he was soon undeceived, for the Count's next remark was significant:

"You are acquainted with the Lady Rosalind Valdai?" he said.

"I am," returned Ruric, now beginning to wonder.

"Well, sir," resumed Damonoff, with much haughtiness, "perhaps my business can be quickly and satisfactorily settled. It is my desire to make the Lady Rosalind my wife."

Ruric Nevel started at these words, and he clasped his hands to hide their tremulousness. But he was not long debating upon an answer.

"And why have you come to me with this information, sir?" he asked.

"You should know that already. Do you not love the lady?"

"Upon my soul, Sir Count, you ask me a strange question. What right have you to question me upon such a theme?"

"The right that every man has to pave the way for his own rights," replied Damonoff, sharply. "But if you choose not to answer, let it pass. I know you do love the lady. And now I ask you to renounce all claims to her hand."

"By St. Paul, Sir Count, your tongue runs into strange moods of speech. I renounce all claims to Rosalind Valdai's hand?—Was't so you meant?"

"Aye, sir—precisely so."

"Perhaps you will inform me what claims I may have in that quarter," Ruric returned, with some tremulousness in his tone, for the very subject was one that moved him deeply.

"Ruric Nevel you shall not say that I did not make myself fully understood, and hence I will explain." The Count spoke this as speaks a man who feels that he is doing a very condescending thing, and in the same tone he proceeded: "The Lady Rosalind is of noble parentage and very wealthy. My own station and wealth are equal with hers. My station, at all events. She may possess the undivided right to more property than I do. But that matters not. I love her, and must have her for my wife. I have been to see the noble Duke, her guardian, and he objects not to my suit. But he informed me that there was one impediment, and that was her love for you. He knows full well—as I know, and as all must know—that she could never become your wife; but yet he is anxious not to interfere too much against her inclinations. So a simple denial from you, to the effect that you can never claim her hand, is all that is necessary. You understand me, I trust. We seek this only for the fair lady's own good. Of course, you must be aware that the Duke would never consent to her union with you; and yet he would wish to have your denial to show to Rosalind when he announces his decision. I have a paper here all drawn up, and all that will be necessary is simply your signature. Here—it is only a plain, simple avowal on your part that you have no hopes, nor thoughts of seeking the hand of the lady in marriage."

As the Count spoke he drew a paper from the bosom of his marten doublet, and having opened it he handed it towards the gun-maker. But Ruric took it not. He drew back and gazed the visitor sternly in the face.

"Sir Count," he uttered, in a tone full of noble indignation, "what do you suppose I am? Do you mean to tell me that Olga, Duke of Tula, has commissioned you to obtain such a renunciation of me?"

"Stephen," spoke the Count, turning to his companion, "you heard the instructions the Duke gave me this morning?"

"Aye," returned Urzen, directing his speech to Ruric. "I did hear; and you have stated the case plainly."

"I may be as much surprised as yourself," resumed the Count, haughtily, "at this strange taste of the Duke. Why he should seek this signal from you I can only imagine upon his desire to call up no regrets in the bosom of his fair ward. He knows that she was once intimate with you, and that she now feels a warm friendship for you. For her sake he would have this signal from you."

"But how for her sake?" asked Ruric.

"Why," returned Damonoff, do you not see? Rosalind, in the simplicity of her heart, may think that you—a—that you might claim her love; and out of pure principle grant it to you simply because you were the first claimant."

"But I never claimed her love," said Ruric, warmly. "If she loves me, she loves me from her own heart. With the noble Duke I never spoke but once, and then he came here for me to temper his sword. If you would marry with the lady, do so; and if you seek help in the work, seek it from those who have some power in the matter."

"You mistake, sir," uttered the Count, hotly. "I seek not *power* now. I only seek a simple word from one who may have some influence—even as a beggar, having saved the life of a king, may, through royal gratitude, wield an influence. Will you sign the paper?"

Now all this seemed very strange to Ruric, and he knew that there was something behind the curtain which he was not permitted to know. He knew the proud and stubborn Duke well enough to know that he never would have sent such a message as this but for some design more than had yet appeared. In short, he could not understand the matter at all. It looked dark and complex, and its face was in direct conflict with the nature of the man from whom it now appeared to have emanated. Ruric pondered upon this a few moments, and he made up his mind that he would on no account yield an atom to the strange demand thus made upon him.

"Sir Count," he said, calmly and surely, "you have plainly stated your proposition, and I will as plainly answer. I cannot sign the paper."

"Ha!" gasped Damonoff, in quick passion. "Do you refuse?"

"Most flatly."

For a few moments the Count gazed into Ruric's face as though he doubted the evidence of his own senses.

"It is the Duke's command," he said, at length.

"The Duke of Tula holds no power of command over me," was the gun-maker's calm reply.

"Beware! Once more, I say—Sign this paper!"

"You but waste your breath, Sir Count, in speaking thus. You have my answer."

"By heavens, Ruric Nevel, you'll sign this!" the Count cried, madly.

"Never, sir."

"But look ye, sirrah: Here is my whole future of life based upon my hopes of union with this fair girl. Her guardian bids me get this paper of you ere I can have her hand. And now do you think I'll give it up so easily? By the saints of heaven, I'll have your name to this, or I'll have your life!"

"Now your tongue runs away with you, Sir Count. I have given you my answer. Be sure that only one man on earth can prevail upon me to place my name upon that paper."

"And who is he?"

"I mean the Emperor."

"But you will sign it!" hissed Damonoff, turning pale with rage. "Here it is—sign! If you would live—sign!"

"Perhaps he cannot write," suggested Urzen, contemptuously.

"Then he may make his mark," rejoined the Count, in the same contemptuous tone.

"It might not require much more urging to induce me to make my mark in a manner not at all agreeable to you, sir," the youth returned, with his teeth now set, and the dark veins upon his brow starting more plainly out. "You have come upon my premises, and you have sought your purpose. You now have your answer, and for your own sake—for my sake—I beg you to leave me."

"Not until your name is upon this paper!" cried Damonoff, shaking the missive furiously and crumpling it in his hand.

"Are you mad, Sir Count? Do you think me a fool?"

"Aye—a consummate one."

"Then," returned Ruric, with a curl of utter contempt upon his finely-chiselled lip, "you need have no further dealings with me. There is my door, sir."

For some moments Conrad Damonoff seemed unable to speak from very anger. He had surely some deep, anxious purpose in obtaining Ruric's name to that paper; and to be thus thwarted by a common artisan was maddening to one who, like him, based all his force of character upon his title.

"Sign!" he hissed.

"Fool!" uttered Ruric, unable longer to contain himself in view of such stupid persistance. "Do you seek a quarrel with me?"

"Seek?—I seek what I will have. Will you sign?"

"Once more—No!"

"Then, by heavens, you shall know what it is to thwart such as me! How's that?"

As these words passed from the Count's lips in a low, hissing whisper, he aimed a blow with his fist at Ruric's head. The gun-maker had not dreamed of such a dastard act, and he was not prepared for it. Yet he dodged it sufficiently to escape the mark upon his face, receiving the blow lightly upon the side of the head. But he stopped not to consider now. As the Count drew back Ruric dealt him a blow upon the brow that felled him to the floor like a dead ox.

"Beware, Stephen Urzen!" he whispered to the Count's companion, as that individual made a movement as though he would come forward. "I am not myself now, and you are safest where you are."

The man thus addressed viewed the gun-maker a few moments, and he seemed to conclude that he had better avoid a personal encounter, for his fists relaxed, and he moved to the side of his fallen friend and assisted him to his feet.

Conrad Damonoff gazed into his antagonist's face a few moment's in silence. His face was ashen pale, and his wholeframe quivered. Upon his forehead there was a livid spot where he had been struck, but the skin was not broken.

"Ruric Nevel," he said, in a hissing, maddened tone, "you will hear from me. The mad spirit of a vengeance such as mine can overlook your plebeian stock."

And with this he turned away.

"Paul," said the gun-maker, turning to his boy, after the men had gone, "not a word of this to my mother. Be sure."

### CHAPTER III.

#### LOVE.

That night Ruric Nevel had strange fancies while waking, and strange dreams while sleeping. Long and deeply did he ponder upon the strange business which had called Count Conrad to his shop, and in no way, under no light, could he get any reason from it. Why he, a youth who had never spoken with the proud Duke, save once on common business, and who was so far down in the social scale, should have been thus called upon to give a virtual consent to the bestowal of Rosalind Valdai's hand, was beyond his ken. He was but a poor artizan—she, a wealthy heiress and a scion of nobility—and she was under the legal guardianship of the Duke, whose word, so far as she was concerned was law. And again—Conrad Damonoff was a Count, and reputed to be wealthy. To be sure, he was somewhat dissolute, but then a majority of his compeers were the same. Now, if this Count loved the lady Rosalind, and had asked for her hand, and the Duke was willing he should have it, why had this extraordinary proposal been sent to the poor gun-maker?

Ruric asked this question of himself a hundred times. He would commence and lay down all the premises in his mind, and then he would try to make the deduction; but no reasonable one could he arrive at. One thought clung about him, like a dim spectre at night, which Hope would make an angel, and which Fear would paint a demon. Could it be possible that Rosalind had told her love for him, and that the Duke would pay some deference to it? He tried to think so. Hope whispered that it might be so. But Fear would force itself in, and speak in tones so loud that they could not be misunderstood. Finally the youth resolved upon the only reasonable course. He concluded to let the matter rest, so far as his own surmises were concerned, until he could see Rosalind,—and that he was determined to do as soon as possible.

On the following morning, as he was preparing for breakfast, he saw Olga, the Duke pass by, and strike off into the Borodino road. Now, thought he, is the time for the visit to Rosalind; and as soon as he had eaten his breakfast he prepared for the visit. He dressed well, and no man in Moscow had a nobler look when the dust of toil was removed from his brow and garb.

"Paul," he said, entering the shop where the boy was at work, "I may be back at noon. At any rate, such is my intention; and if either of those men call who were here yesterday, you may tell them so."

"But," returned the lad, "if they ask me any questions?"

"Answer them as you think best."

"And if they should ask me if you would fight?"

"Tell them that I hold my life as too dear at the expense of an insult."

"But surely, my master, the Count will challenge you."

"I think he will. And," added Ruric, as an entire new thought came to his mind, "mayhap he came here to create a quarrel to that end. By my soul, I think he did."

"I am sure of it," said Paul.

A moment Ruric's frame quivered with suppressed passion, and then he said,—

"Let them come—and if they come—or if either of them comes, while I am gone—tell them, or him, that I am their very humble servant in all things reasonable."

Paul promised, and then the gun-maker turned away. In the hall he threw on his heavy fur pelisse, and having reached the nearest hostelry he took a horse and sledge and started off for the Kremlin, within which the duke resided.

Within one of the sumptuously furnished apartments of the palace of the Duke of Tula sat Rosalind Valdai. She was a beautiful girl; moulded in perfect form, with the full flush of health and vigor, and possessing a face of peculiar sweetness and intelligence. She was only nineteen years of age, and she had been ten years an orphan. Her hair was of a golden hue, and the sunlight loved to dwell amid the clustering curls. Her eyes, which were of a deep liquid blue, sparkled brightly when she was happy; and when she smiled the lovely dimples of her cheeks held the smile even after it had faded from the lips. There was nothing of the aristocrat in her look—nothing proud, nothing haughty; but gentleness and love were the true elements of her soul, and she could only be happy when she knew that she was truly loved. She liked respect, but she spurned that respect which only aims at outward show, while the heart may be reeking with vilest sensualism.

Rosalind sat there, in the apartment which was hers for her own private use, and she was sad and thoughful. One fair hand supported her pure brow, while with the other she twisted the ends of the silken sash that confined her heavy robe. Thus she sat when the door of her apartment was opened, and a young girl entered. This new comer was a small, fair creature, bright and quick, with that raven hair, and those large, dark eyes of dreamy light, which bespeak the child of Moslem blood. Her name was Zenobie, and she was now about sixteen years of age. Rosalind's father had picked her up on the battle field from which the Turks had fled, and being unable to find any claimants he had brought her home, then almost an infant. And now she was Rosalind's attendant and companion. She loved her kind and gentle mistress, and would have laid down life itself in the service.

"How now, Zenobie?" asked Rosalind, as she noticed the girl hesitate.

"There is a gentleman below who would see you," the girl replied.

"Then tell him I cannot see him," said Rosalind, trembling.

"But this is Ruric Nevel, my mistress."

"Ruric!" uttered the fair maiden, starting up, while the rich blood mounted to her brow and temples. "O, I am glad he has come. My prayers are surely answered. Lead him hither, Zenobie."

The girl departed, and ere long afterwards Ruric entered the apartment. He walked quickly to where Rosalind had arisen to her feet, and taking one of her hands in both his own he pressed it to his lips. He had had a well-formed speech upon his lips when he entered the room, but 'twas gone now. He could only gaze into the lovely face before him and murmur the name that sounded so sweetly on his lips. But the emotions of his soul became calm at length, and then he spoke with more freedom.

"Lady," he said, after he had taken a seat, "you will pardon me for this visit when you know its cause. And you will pardon me, too, if I speak plainly what I have to speak."

"Surely, sir——"

"O— call me Ruric. Let us at least not forget the friendship of childhood."

"Then I am not a *lady*," said Rosalind, smiling.

"No, Rosalind."

"Ah, Ruric."

"As we were in childhood," whispered the youth.

"In all but years," returned Rosalind, in the same low tone.

"And I may wear the same image in my heart?"

"I cannot cast it from mine if I would."

"The image of childhood, dear Rosalind?"

"Aye—save that it has grown to manhood, dear Ruric."

What more could he ask for love? He had not aimed at this confession so soon. But he put it not from him now. He gazed a moment into the fair maiden's kindling eye, and as he saw the love-lit tear gathering there and the happy smile working its way about the rosy lips, and away into the joyous dimples, he opened his arms and clasped the fondly loved one to his bosom.

"Oh, I am not deceived in this," he murmured. "Speak, dearest one."

"I cannot forget the love of the happy times agone," the noble girl replied, gazing up through her happy tears. "Oh, how many and many an hour have I prayed to God that those days might return, and that the one true heart of earth I loved might be mine once more. Ruric, why should I hide the truth, or why set it aside. To me thou art all in all. I have no one else to love, and none to love me else, save the noble girl who brought you hither. I can tell you no more."

Happy Ruric! Happy at that moment—forgetting all else but the love that gleamed out upon him then, and clasping the cherished object so ardently to his bosom.

But the moments flew on, and at length his mind came to the subject of his visit.

"Rosalind," he said, holding one of her fair hands in his grasp, "you know the Count Conrad Damonoff?"

"Aye," returned the maiden, with a shudder.

"He is here very often, and he has forced himself upon my companionship when, if he had sense, he must have known I liked it not."

"He is a suitor for your hand, is he not?"

"He was; but he is not now."

"Not now?" repeated Ruric, with surprise. "What mean you?"

"Why—simply that he has asked the Duke for my hand, and that he was answered in the negative."

"Did you hear the Duke answer him so?"

"No; but so the Duke assured me he had done. But what mean you?"

"I will tell you. Yesterday the Count came to my dwelling, accompanied by Stephen Urzen. He had a paper drawn up by the Duke's own hand, in which I was made to say—or rather, by which the writer said—that he disclaimed all pretentions to your hand, and that he wished not to marry you.—That he freely gave you up, meaning to seek within the sphere of his own social circle some companion when he wished. And this I was asked to sign."

"By the Count?"

"Yes,—but by the Duke's orders."

"Oh—it cannot be," uttered the fair girl, trembling.

"And he further assured me that the Duke had requested him to obtain my signature thereto, so that he might receive your hand without impediment."

"So that the *Count* might receive my hand?"

"Yes."

"But the Duke assured me only yesterday that I should be troubled no more with the Count. May there not be some mistake?"

"There can be none on my part. The instrument was in the Duke's own hand."

"But you did not sign it."

"Ask me if I took my own life—if I made a curse for all I loved."

"It is strange," the maiden murmured, bowing her head a few moments. "And yet," she added, looking up into her companion's face, "I do not think the Duke would be treacherous?"

"He may be," answered Ruric. "He knows how lightly our noble emperor holds empty titles, and perhaps he fears that if this matter came to the imperial ear, and you should claim the right to marry with whom you pleased, Peter would grant your prayer. Hence he wished to get my claim set aside so that he may have a clearer field in which to move. Do you know how the Duke's affairs stand at present?"

Rosalind thought awhile ere she answered; and then, while a startled expression came to her face she said,—

"Ruric, I do remember now that between the Duke and young Damonoff there is some matter of dispute. There is some question of property."

"Ah," uttered the youth earnestly. "How is that?"

"Why—as near as I can understand it, there was a dispute between the Duke and the elder Damonoff concerning the ownership of Drotzen, the estate on the Don, in Kaluga; and since the father's death Conrad has maintained his family claim. You know the Duke and the old Count married sisters, and this estate belonged to them."

"And now," suggested Ruric, "may not the Duke mean to compromise this matter by giving your hand to the Count, and taking Drotzen in exchange?"

"Oh, I cannot think so," the maiden returned, earnestly. "The Duke would not do that. He is kind to me, I am sure. He loves me as though I were his own child. I know he does, for in a thousand ways he has shown it. He is mindful of my comfort, and anticipates my every want. No, no,—if he is deceiving any one he must be deceiving the Count."

Ruric started as the new suspicion flashed upon him. Had the Duke sent Damonoff upon that mission on purpose to get him into a quarrel. "By my soul," thought the youth to himself, "the Duke knows that I have taught the sword-play, and he knows that the Count would be no match for me. So he thinks in this subtle manner to make me an instrument for ridding him of a plague." But the youth was careful not to let Rosalind know of this. He knew she would be unhappy if she knew that a duel was likely to come off between himself and the Count.

After some minutes of comparative silence, Ruric touched upon a point which lay very near his heart.

"Rosalind," he said, taking both her hands in his own, "there is one point upon which we have never spoken; and I know you would have me speak plainly and candidly. You know my situation. My father and your father fought side by side, but my father fell, while yours returned to his home. For his eminent services your father received a title and a noble estate from the grateful Feodor, while my father was only forgotten. Hence our stations are now widely different. Yet I am not poor. No other man in the empire can compete with me in the manufacture of arms, and from my labor I derive a handsome income. You know all that. And now, if other obstacles were removed, would you give me your hand, and become mine for life?"

"Aye, Ruric," the noble girl answered, with beaming eyes, and a joyful expression of countenance. "Were you reduced to the lowest estate of poverty, so long as your generous, pure soul was free, I should only be the more anxious to lift you up. Oh, my love knows only the heart whereon it is secured, and for my future of joy I ask only the truth of my husband's love."

"Bless you, dearest," Ruric murmured, clasping the fair being to his bosom. And for a long while Rosalind's head lay pillowed upon the shoulder of the man she so truly, fondly loved.

That was not the time for bringing forward doubts and fears. Ruric had many questions in his mind concerning the impediments that stood in the way of their union, but he kept them to himself now. At length he arose to take his departure, and he simply said, as he drew the maiden to his side,—

"You will not allow the Duke to give your hand away."

"Never, Ruric."

"If he asks you for your hand to bestow upon any of his friends, you will tell him——"

"That my heart is not mine to give, and that my hand cannot go without it."

"Oh—bless you, Rosalind—bless you. God keep and guard you ever."

There was one warm, ardent pressure of lip to lip, and then Ruric Nevel turned away, and was soon in the open court. Here he entered his sledge, and then drove to the barracks in the Khitagorod, where he inquired for Alaric Orsa, a lieutenant of the guard. The officer was quickly found, and as he met Ruric his salutation was warm and cordial. He was a young man, not over five-and-twenty, and one of the finest looking soldiers in the guard.

"Alaric," said the gun-maker, after the first friendly salutations had passed, "I may have a meeting with Conrad Count Damonoff. He has sought a quarrel—insulted me most grossly—aimed a blow at my head—and I knocked him down. You can judge as well as I what the result must be."

"Most surely he will challenge you," cried the officer, excitedly.

"So I think," resumed Ruric, calmly. "And now will serve me in the event?"

"With pleasure."

"I may refer his messenger to you?"

"Yes—surely. And how shall I act? What will you do?"

"Knock him down again under the same provocation."

"I understand. You wish to retract nothing?"

"No. Listen: I will tell you all since I seek your aid."

And thereupon Ruric went on and related all had that occurred at the time of the Count's visit to his shop.

"Good!" uttered Alaric, as the gun-maker finished. "He must challenge you, and then you'll punish him. He's too proud now. He can handle some of his lilytops who associate with him; and perhaps he thinks he can do the same when he comes out among the harder men. But never mind—I will be punctual and faithful."

Ruric reached home just as his mother was placing the board for dinner. He often went away on business, and she thought not of asking him any questions.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHALLENGE.

In the afternoon Ruric retired to his shop, where he went at work upon a gun which had been ordered some days before. As yet he had said nothing to Paul concerning the affair of the day before since his return from the Kremlin. He asked him now, however, if any one had called.

"Only the monk," returned Paul, without seeming to consider that there was anything very important in the visit.

"Do you mean the black monk—Valdimir?" asked the young man starting.

"Yes, my master. He called here about the middle of the forenoon. He wanted one of the small daggers with the pearl haft."

"And did you let him have one?"

"Certainly. He paid me four ducats for it, and would have paid more had I been willing to take it."

"And did he make any conversation?"

"Yes. He asked me why the Count Damonoff came here yesterday."

"Ha— How did he know of their visit?"

"He was waiting at the inn for a sledge when he overheard the Count and his companion conversing upon the subject."

"And did he ask you any questions touching the particulars?"

"Yes—many."

"And how answered you?"

"I told him the whole story, from beginning to end. I found he knew something of their purpose from what he accidentally overheard, and rather than have him go away full of surmises, I told him all."

"Of the message, too?"

"Yes, my master. I told him all that happened, from the showing of the paper which the Duke had drawn up, to the departure of the angry man."

"And what did the monk say?" Ruric asked, very earnestly.

"Why—he said he knew the Count, and that he was a proud, reckless fellow, and worth but little to society. That was all. He did not seem to care much about it any way; only he said he should have done just as you did, and that every law of justice would bear you out. He had more curiosity than interest, though I am sure all his sympathies are with you."

"Very well," returned Ruric. "It can matter but little what the monk thinks about it, though I would rather have him know the truth if he must know anything, for I would not be misunderstood."

"He understands it all now, my master; and I trust you are not offended at the liberty I took in telling him."

"Not at all, Paul—not at all."

Here the conversation dropped, and the work was resumed in silence. It was past three o'clock when Ruric's mother came and informed him that a gentleman, in the house, would speak with him."

"Is it Stephen Urzen?" asked the youth.

His mother said it was.

"Then bid him come out here."

Claudia retired, and in a few moments more the gentleman made his appearance.

"Ruric Nevel," he said, bowing very stiffly and haughtily, "I bring a message from the Count Damonoff."

"Very well, sir," returned the gun-maker, proudly, "I am ready to receive it."

Thereupon Urzen drew a sealed note from his pocket and handed it to Ruric, who took it and broke the seal. He opened it, and read as follows:

> "Ruric Nevel:—An insult of the most aggravating nature has for the time levelled all distinctions of caste between us. Your blood alone can wash out the stain. I would not murder you outright, and in no other way but this can I reach you. My friend, the bearer of this, will make all arrangements. If you dare not meet me, say so, that all may know who is the coward. Damonoff."

When Ruric had read the missive he crushed it in his hand, and gazed its bearer some moments in the face without speaking.

"Will you answer?" asked Urzen. He spoke more softly than before, for he saw something in the gun-maker's face which he dared not provoke.

"Are you acquainted with Alaric Orsa, a lieutenant of the guard?"

"Yes, sir—I know him well."

"Then let me refer you to him. He will make all necessary arrangements, and I shall hold myself bound by his plans. I trust that is satisfactory."

"Yes, sir."

"Then you and I need have no more to say."

"Only on one point," said Urzen, with some little show of confusion. "You are the challenged party, and you will have the choice of weapons. The Count has not mentioned this—mind you, he has not; but I, as his friend, deem it no more than right to speak of it.—I trust you will choose a gentleman's weapon. In the use of the pistol, or the gun, he is not versed."

"While you imagine I am," said Ruric with a contemptuous curl of the lip; for he knew that the man was lying. He could see by the fellow's very looks that Damonoff had commissioned him to broach this matter.

"Of course you are," returned Urzen.

"And the Count is most excellently versed in the use of the sword, is he not?"

"He is accounted a fair swordsman."

"Aye—so I thought. But it matters not to me. The thought had not entered my mind before, save that I supposed swords would be the only weapons thought of. However, Orsa will settle it with you. I have given him no directions at all, save to serve me as he thinks proper, and to act upon the understanding that if I have given offence to the Count, I would do the same again under provocation. You understand now!"

"I do, sir," returned Urzen, in a choking tone.

"Then wait a moment, and I will give you a message to Orsa."

Thus speaking Ruric went to his desk, and upon the bottom of the missive he had received from the Count he wrote:

> "Dear Alaric:—I send this to you by the same hand that bore it to me, and you are hereby empowered to act for me as you may deem proper. I shall be governed strictly by your arrangements. Ruric."

Having written this he showed it to Urzen, and asked him if he would bear it to the lieutenant. An affirmative reply was given, and then simply folding the note in the opposite way from the original fold, the gun-maker superscribed it anew to the lieutenant, and handed it to his visitor. Urzen took it, and with a stiff bow, but without speaking, he turned and left the place.

That evening, about eight o'clock, a sledge drove up to Ruric's door, and Alaric Orsa entered the house. He called the youth aside, and informed him that the arrangements had all been made.

"Damonoff is in a hurry," he said, "and we have appointed the meeting at ten o'clock tomorrow forenoon. It will take place at the bend of the river just beyond the Viska Hill."

"And the weapons?" asked Ruric.

"Swords," returned Orsa. "The Count will bring his own, and he gives you the privilege of selecting such an one as you choose."

"I thank you, Alaric, for your kindness thus far, and you may rest assured that I shall be prompt."

"Suppose I call here in the morning for you?" suggested the visitor.

"I should be pleased to have you do so."

"I will, then. I shall be along in good season with my sledge, and we will both reach the ground together."

Thus it was arranged, and then Orsa took his leave.

When Ruric returned to his seat by the fireplace he noticed that his mother watched him narrowly, and with more than ordinary interest. He had once made up his mind that he would say nothing to his mother about the affair until it was over; but as the time was set, and the hour drew nigh, his mind wavered. When it was over where might he be! But he was cut short in his reflections by the voice of his parent.

"Ruric," she said, and her voice trembled while she spoke, "you will pardon me for prying into your affairs, but I cannot hide from myself that something of more than usual moment is on the tapis with you. Why are these men calling to and fro? and why are you so thoughtful and moody? You know a mother's feelings—and you will pardon a mother's anxiety."

"Surely, my mother," the youth returned, gazing up for a moment, and then letting his eyes droop again. At length he resumed,—"I had made up my mind to tell you all ere you spoke."

There was something deep and significant in Ruric's tone, and his mother quickly caught the spark.

"What is it it?" she tremblingly uttered, moving her chair nearer to her child's side.

"Listen:" the young man said; and thereupon he detailed the circumstances attending the visit of the Count Damonoff to his shop. Then he told of his own visit to Rosalind, and its result; and then of the visit of Stephen Urzen.

"And now, my mother," he added, without waiting for any reply, "you know it all. You see how I am situated. Remember, our nation has reached its present point by successful war. The soul of the nation is built upon military honor, and since our noble Emperor has opened the way of advancement to the lowest of his subjects who are brave and true, the coward is looked upon with disgust upon all hands. Yet, my mother, I would have you speak."

For some moments Claudia Nevel was silent. But at length she said, while a tear glistened in her eye,—

"I have given one loved being up to my country's good. Russia took my husband from me, and I could ill afford now to lose my son. Yet, rather than one stain should rest upon his name I would see him dead before me. O, Ruric, you know whether dishonor would rest upon you were you to refuse this challenge."

"I will speak plainly, my dear mother," returned the youth in a tremulous tone, for his parent's kindness had moved him. "In my soul I should feel perfectly justified in refusing this meeting, for no principle of real honor is at stake. But were I to back out now from this I should never meet another generous look in Moscow. Every one would point the finger of scorn towards me, and the word *coward* would ring always in my ears. It may be a false state of things—I feel that it really is so; but how can I help it? It is the curse of all great military epochs. Battle alone makes heroes, and so all must measure their honor by the force of their arms. The Count carries even now upon his brow the mark of my blow, and all will say he has a right to demand satisfaction; though I know that he provoked the quarrel on purpose. I cannot refuse him on the ground of station, for he is above me in that. I must meet him."

"Then," said the mother, in a low, calm tone, but with much effort, "you shall not feel that your mother would thwart your design. If your own good judgment says, go—then go. If they bring your body to me in the stern grasp of death, I shall pray for the soul that has gone, and shall hope to meet you in the home of the redeemed. If you come back to me alive I shall thank God that you are spared; but alas! the joy will be clouded with the thought of blood upon your hands, and the knowledge that my joy is another's grief."

"No, no, my mother," cried Ruric, quickly and earnestly. "I will not have a fellow being's blood upon my hand if I can avoid it. Only to save my own life will I take his. He has done all this himself—all—all. The quarrel was his own, and the first blow was his. The challenge is his, and now is not the responsibility his also?

"It is my son, so far as he alone is concerned. If you have a responsibility it must be to your own soul. But tell me—has not the Emperor made some law touching this practice of duelling?"

"Yes—but only the challenger is responsible. The party challenged is held free from blame in the eyes of the law."

"Then I shall interpose no more objections," said the mother. She tried to speak hopefully, but she could not hide the fearful sadness of her heart. "Could fervent prayer avert the blow it should not fall; but I can only pray as one without power."

A long time after this was passed in silence. Both the mother and son seemed to have something upon their minds which they wished to say, but dared not. But the former at length overcame her reluctance.

"Ruric, my son," she said, keeping back the tears that struggled for utterance in their silent speech, "is there any little word you would leave?—any matter of moment—"

"No, no," the boy answered, speaking calmly by effort. I am yours, and all is yours. But I shall not fall."

"Ah—be not too confident my son. Let no such assurance lead you to forget your God. I have heard of this Count. It was he who slew Rutger; and Momjako, too, he slew in the duel. He is an expert swordsman, and surely means to kill you if he can."

"I am aware of that my mother. But do you not know that we are all prone to overlook our own powers when wondering upon the feats of others! I may be pardoned for assuring you that the only man who has ever yet overcome the Count at the sword-play was one of my own scholars. While in Spain I practised with some of the best swordsmen in the kingdom.——But listen: I will send one word. For yourself I can tell you nothing which you do not know; but yet you may see Rosalind. If you do, tell her—But you know my soul. You can tell her as you please.—But I shall not fall."

It was now late, and ere long Ruric kissed his mother, and then retired to his bed.

And the widow was left alone. With her eyes she followed the retreating form of her beloved son, and when he was gone from her sight she bowed her head and sobbed aloud When she reached her humble couch she knelt by the side thereof, and poured forth her pent up soul to God. When her head had pressed the pillow she tried to hope—she tried to fasten one hope in her mind; but she looked only into the Night. Not one ray of light reached her struggling soul. She opened her eyes of promise in vain—for she looked into a gloom so utter that out of its depths loomed only the blackness of Despair.

Sleep on Ruric. But oh! could'st thou know how thy fond mother's heart is racked there'd be no sleep for thee!

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DUEL.

On the following morning Ruric was up betimes, and at the breakfast table not a word of the one all-absorbing theme was uttered. After the meal was finished the gun-maker went out to his shop and took down from one of the closets a long leathern case, in which were two swords, both of the same make and finish, only different in size. They were Toledo blades, and of most exquisite workmanship and finish. Ruric took out the heaviest one, which was a two-edged weapon with a cross hilt of heavily gilded metal. He placed the point upon the floor and then, with all his weight he bent the blade till the pommel touched the point. The lithe steel sprang back to its place with a sharp clang, and the texture was not started. Then he struck the flat of the blade upon the anvil with great force. The ring was sharp and clear, and the weapon remained unharmed.

"By St. Michael, Paul, Moscow does not contain another blade like that. Damascus never saw a better."

Thus spoke the gun-maker to his boy as he balanced the beautiful weapon in his hand.

"I think you are right, my master," the boy returned, who had beheld the trial of the blade with unbounded admiration. "But," he added, "could you not temper a blade like that?"

"Perhaps, if I had the steel. But I have it not. The steel of these two blades came from India, and was originally in one weapon—a ponderous, two-handed affair, belonging to a Bengal chieftain. The metal possesses all the hardness of the finest razor, with the elasticity of the most subtle spring. My old master at Toledo gave me these as a memento. Were I to mention the sum of money he was once offered for this largest one you would hardly credit it."

"How much?" asked Paul, with a boy's curiosity.

"It was a sum equal to about seven hundred ducats."

"And yet he gave it away."

"Aye—for its price was but imaginary, while its worth to him was only commensurate with the good it did him. If he told the truth he loved me, and these he gave me as a parting gift, as the best patterns I could wish for when making such."

After this Ruric put up the smaller sword, and then gave Paul a few directions about the work, promising to be back before night. The faithful boy shook his head dubiously as he heard this promise, but he said nothing, and shortly afterwards Ruric went into the house. Just then Alaric Orsa drove up to the door.

Ruric was all ready but putting on his bonnet and pelisse.—His mother was in the kitchen. He went to her with a smile upon his face. He put his arms about her and drew her to his bosom.

"God bless you, my mother.—I shall come back." He said this, and then he kissed her.

"God keep—and—"

It was all she could say.

Ruric gazed a moment into her pale face—then he kissed her again—and again be said,—

"God bless you, my mother. I shall come back."

He dared stop to speak no more. Gently seating his fond mother upon a chair he turned and hurried from the place. In the hall he threw on his pelisse and bonnet, and then he opened the door and passed out.

"Have you a good weapon?" asked Orsa, as the horse started on.

"I have a fair one. I *think* it will not deceive me," returned Ruric.

"I asked," resumed Orsa, "because Damonoff prides himself upon the weapon he wears. It is a German blade, and he thinks he can cut in twain the blade of any other weapon in Moscow with it."

"I have a good weapon," Ruric said, quietly; "and one which has stood more tests than most swords will bear." And after some further remarks he related the peculiar circumstances attending the making of the sword, and his possession of it.

At length they struck upon the river, and in half an hour more they reached the appointed spot. The day was beautiful. The sun shone brightly upon the glistening snow, and the air was still and calm. The sharp frost of the atmosphere served only to brace the system up, and Ruric threw open his pelisse, that he might breathe more freely. He had been upon the ground but a few minutes when the other party came in sight around the head of the river.

As soon as the Count and his second had arrived, and the horses had been secured, the lieutenant proposed that they should repair to the building which was close at hand. This was a large open boat-house, which was unused and deserted in the winter, and it was proposed to go in there because the reflection of the strong sunlight from the bright snow was calculated to blind and blur the eye.

"Ha! what means that?" uttered Orsa, as he saw a sledge just turning the bend of the river with an officer in it.

"It is only a surgeon," replied Damonoff. "I would not cut a man's flesh without giving him a fair chance to survive it."

"And then you may find him serviceable to yourself, eh?" suggested the lieutenant.

"Of course. There is no telling what may happen."

In a moment more the new sledge came up, and Ruric recognized its inmate as an army surgeon whom he had seen before, though he knew not his name.

"Now for the old boat-house," cried Urzen.

"Aye," added Damonoff.—"Let us have this business done, for I would be back to dinner. I dine with Olga to-day, and a fair maiden awaits my coming."

"Notice him not," whispered Orsa, who walked close by Ruric's side. "That is one of his chief points when engaged in an affair of this kind. He hopes to get you angry, and so unhinge your nerves."

"Never fear," returned the gun-maker. "Be sure he only brings new danger to himself, for such efforts will find their point in the muscle of my arm."

The party halted when they reached the interior of the rough structure, and the Count threw off his pelisse and drew his sword. Ruric followed his example.

"Sir Count," the latter said, as he moved a step forward, "ere we commence this work I wish all present to understand distinctly how I stand. You have sought this quarrel from the first. Without the least provocation from me you have insulted me most grossly, and this is the climax. So, before God and man, be the result upon your own head."

"Out, lying knave——"

"Hold," cried the surgeon, laying his hand heavily upon the Count's arm. "You have no right to speak thus, for you lower yourself when you do it. If you have come to fight, do so honorably."

An angry reply was upon Damonoff's lips, but he did not speak it. He turned to his antagonist and said,—

"Will you measure weapons, sir? Mine may be a mite the longest. I seek no advantage; and I have one here of the same length and weight as my own if you wish it."

"I am well satisfied as it is," replied Ruric.

"Then take your ground.——Are you ready?"

"I am!"

The two swords were crossed in an instant, with a clear, sharp clang.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

## GIRLHOOD.

A clever girl, whose willingness to study equals the utmost wish of her instructors, is encouraged and urged to gratify the ambition of her parents. Her brain does all that is required of it, and a good deal more, for it will not go properly to sleep at night. She lies awake, or has painful dreams, or frightens her friends by walking about in the partial sleep of somnambulism, and is frequently obliged to leave her books for her bed by headache. It is almost certain that her general health has been sacrificed, or is about to be so, though it may require a medical eye to discern the proofs. The functions of nutrition have been weakened, and perhaps vitiated; and if so, her habitually quickened pulse is only carrying the accelerated blood to her organs to afford materials for spoiling their structure. Sudden and frequent fits of complete fainting may indicate that the brain is already the seat of morbid deposit; or, after a few years, during which none of her bodily functions go on as they ought, the fatal cough comes on, which shows that the lungs have principally suffered. Even if no such catastrophe is to happen, all the signs of vivacity of mind gradually disappear, and the precocious girl is hardly to be recognized in the dull and languid young woman.

## BOYHOOD.

All other things alike, the boy who excels in games and feats of strength and skill, is most likely to excel in more important ways in manhood. To develope the mind, and let the bodily health shift for itself, is the way to get a plentiful blossom, but very little fruit. A late maturity is worth waiting for. If the child be really extraordinary, it ought to make it the more easy to wait with confidence for what time only can produce in perfection. The experiment of forcing cannot safely be followed in education as in horticulture. If bodily health is not enjoyed by the grown man, his acquirements will be exercised at a disadvantage, if they are not rendered positively useless.

## THE POOR.

In our intercourse with the poor we must not expect to find them faultless, or destitute of evil tempers, unthankful hearts, gross deception often, or ready to hear and do as we would have them in many little ways that we think would be better and more comfortable. We must not expect to find the smooth tongue governed by a smooth heart, or the kindness shown always understood and valued. But we must look around among our own kindred, among our own people—above all, in our own hearts, and see what is found there, where education may be supposed to have done so much; and then we shall go forth better prepared to encounter those among whom we know it has done so little.

## BAD LISTENERS.

There is no established code of conversation to be acquired by rote. The art of conversing agreeably can only be acquired by practice, and does not necessarily fall to the lot of every person who tries; indeed, those who *try* to converse agreeably usually fail. There should be no consciousness of *trying*; it should be a matter of spontaneous impulse. Avoid equally the two extremes of bashfulness and forwardness; the former would make you ridiculous, the latter offensive. Conversation involves listening as well as talking. Many people talk fluently enough, yet they do not converse well, because they are bad listeners.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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THE NEW YORK LEDGER can be obtained at all the periodical and newspaper stores throughout the United States and Canada.

## OURSELVES.

With this number of the LEDGER, we commence a new TALE, by that popular novelist, SYLVANUS COBB, JR. It is decidedly one of the most entertaining narratives ever published in a newspaper; and, as we remarked last week, must add to MR. COBB's well-earned reputation. In addition to this continued Tale, we will soon (next week, probably,) begin to publish some short stories, complete in each number, by Mr. Cobb. His numerous admirers among our readers will doubtless be gratified to learn that we have secured the services of their favorite.

At the present time, the LEDGER's prospects are highly flattering. Our circulation is increasing with unexampled rapidity; and everything that a liberal management can do to still increase it, and make the LEDGER even more interesting and attractive, will most assuredly be done. Heretofore the *Advocate and Journal*, the *Observer*, and the *Independent*, were considered the leading weeklies (excepting the Tribune) of our city, in point of circulation; but now the circulation of the LEDGER is larger by several thousands than all three of them put together.

Why this immense circulation? the reader is probably ready to ask. Simply because we have advertised extensively,—employed the best and most popular writers, artists, &c., &c., and labored almost day and night ourself. FANNY FERN's services we have monopolized,—no other paper could offer any inducement to her to write a line for them. Mrs. Sigourney furnishes us with some of her very best poetic gems—one of them, by the way, will be found in our columns this week. Our other favorite contributors are almost too numerous to mention; still, we cannot overlook the names of MARY STANLEY GIBSON, MRS. MARY C. VAUGHAN, and "YULA."

The engravings in the LEDGER have elicited universal commendation. Our artist, MR. THWAITES, is acknowledged to be the best in his line in the country; and we have secured his services regularly—he will not illustrate a Tale for any other weekly. Our engravers, too, Messrs. BOBBETT & HOOPER, understand their business to perfection.

Need we say anything more? Yes;—we will just make one remark, and that is, that the LEDGER, notwithstanding it has so many attractions over other and higher-priced papers, is sold at one cent, and in some cases two cents less than its rivals. We have put the price down to the lowest possible figure—FOUR CENTS—but we mean to make as much money as our cotemporaries, by our immensely larger circulation.

## THE GREAT MOVING, LIVING CITY.

A farmer from one of our Western States, if placed, for the first time, about six o'clock in the evening on any of the great thoroughfares of New York, near the heart of the city, would experience the same emotions of wonder and curiosity as an untutored Indian from the Rocky Mountains in the presence of the waving ebb and flow of the Atlantic. As he gazed on the multitudes of men and women, of boys and girls, hurrying like a mighty current up Broadway, or along Chatham street and the Bowery, or across the ferries to Brooklyn and New Jersey, he would naturally ask: "Whence this tide of human beings, and whither does it flow?"

This daily ebb and flow of our population recurring so regularly every morning and evening, is seldom noticed or studied by those who mingle in the crowd. To a stranger, however, it forms one of the most remarkable and attractive exhibitions which our city affords. He sees both sexes, all classes, every age, size, shape, and color, crowded close together, moving along with hasty steps in the same direction, and scarcely a single passenger attempting to stem his way against the stream. The people of New York move before him as in a panorama; specimens of every trade, class and profession are presented to his observation and study. He cannot wish for a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with the appearance and condition of our working population. There goes the newsboy and the errand boy, the porter, the clerk, the mechanic, the merchant, the editor,—and women of every class, from the poor sewing girl, to the rich lady of fashion returning from shopping or from a visit to her husband's place of business. The newsboy shouts out the name of the evening papers while the bundle under his arm brushes, now, the shining coat of a comfortable-looking merchant,—then the thread-bare dress of the honest mechanic,—now, faded gowns and arms half-covered by a scanty shawl, and again, rich flowing robes and rustling silks. The merchant treads on the heels of the mechanic,—the mechanic on the heels of the slow errand-boy or wearied sweeper of the streets. The light-hearted clerk or porter jostles his wealthy employer; the thoughtless whistle in the ears of the studious. There a party of three or four abreast, walking slowly, almost block up the side-walk, while those behind are compelled to pause, and the velocity of the current is for a moment, like the backward movement of a wave when the tide is advancing on the shore. Almost every variety of human form and countenance seems to be there,—faces of every shape, hue and expression, reflecting all the varying moods, tempers and thoughts of every class from manhood to old age, and all the cares, pleasures, passions and feelings of the heart; weariness, anxiety and a painful expression of thoughtfulness, are visible in the steps, gestures and features of the majority in the vast procession. Yet the current with its incessant hum of voices and busy feet never pauses to rest; it is impatient of delay and flows onward like a river with small streams turning aside from it, here and there, until the whole disappears or is lost in the distance.

This daily current, flowing, in the morning towards the heart of the city, in the evening towards its extremities, is caused by the concentration of the large wholesale warehouses within a small circle at the lower end of the island. In fact, the New Amsterdam of the Dutch has become the center of our great city, extending over the greater part of Manhattan Island, over a wide area on Long Island and along the shores of New Jersey; New Amsterdam is now an extensive manufacturing and wholesale establishment of which Wall street is only the counting-room. Into this establishment, as into one vast receptacle, the tide of human beings flows in the morning; and from it, it ebbs in the evening.

Strangers visiting New York cannot spend a leisure hour more profitably than in studying this city-tide, its causes, the men, women and children of which it is composed, their varied employments during the day and their amusements and places of repose during the evening and night. And many a dull, heavy countenance that we have seen in the crowd would be lighted up with thought and feeling if its owner would only observe the current in which he is moving and endeavor to read in the faces of his companions the innumerable cares, joys and sorrows which lie concealed as hidden forces in their bosoms and keep this living tide in perpetual motion.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Early last month, the Marchioness of Londonderry, who is one of the richest and most aristocratic ladies in England, gave a banquet to the laborers that work her coal mines, who assembled to the number of nearly four thousand, in an immense building situated on Clinton Moor, near Durham. The miners, or pitmen as they are technically called, were well and cleanly dressed and looked hearty and merry, the repast was bountiful, five hundred ladies graced the occasion with their presence, Earl Vane presided, and the whole affair was highly satisfactory to all parties. According to an illustration of the scene given in one of the London pictorials, a finer looking body of men than Lady Londonderry's pitmen, is seldom seen—certainly not in the House of Lords.

At the conclusion of the repast, the Marchioness addressed her guests, in a short speech, replete with admirable sentiments, and which concluded in the following words:

> My friends, I advise you to frequent and support your reading-rooms, your mechanics' instititutions, and to avoid the public house—to be orderly, industrious and religious. I speak not of men's creeds.—They rest between man and his Maker. I will not detain you longer than to tell you how much pleasure it has given me to see you all here, and to express my hope that you will remember and heed my words. I feel deeply the responsibility of my position, and I have thought it right to advise and counsel you to the best of my humble power; and I hope that while I am permitted to preside over you, we may each individually and collectively continue to endeavor to do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us.

This speech was received with tumultuous applause, on the subsidence of which, *a coal-heaver*, John Cuthbertson by name, rose from the body of the assembly, and thanked her Ladyship, on the part of his fellow-workmen, for the interest she had exhibited in their behalf; after which, three times three were given for the Marchioness, who retired amidst enthusiastic cheering.

Such a spectacle, with a public interchange of courtesy and mutual good-will between a coal-heaver and one of Britain's proudest patrician ladies, is certainly a significant sign of the times.

## AMERICAN GALLANTRY.

A Frenchman gives the following opinion of American gallantry:

> "Gallantry has deserted Europe: it has taken refuge in the United States. I proclaim it openly—it is in America that I have seen true gallantry universally practiced, spontaneously, disinterestedly. There woman is respected for her own sake, because she is a woman; because she is, or will be, the mother of a citizen. If a good thing could be carried to an excess, I should say that the rights attributed to the fair sex are pusued to exaggeration. The women know their power, they abuse it as tyrants do who know that there are no limits to their authority."

As an example of the abuse of the privileges of ladies he mentions the fact that some women will quietly accept a gentleman's seat in a car or steamboat without so much as saying 'thank you.'—Is it not strange that French politeness is employed in this instance to compliment American gentlemen and to censure American ladies? The gentlemen will gladly receive the compliment; what will the ladies say to the censure?

## GIVE US THE PROOFS.

Mr. Buchanan, in his late speech at the banquet given in his honor by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London, remarked:—"I say nothing of the ladies, because I ought not to speak of them, although they are the fairest part of the creation." Certainly, this is a new and noble sentiment! He makes a promise at the beginning, and breaks it at the end of the same sentence. He says "I ought not to speak of the ladies;" why ought *he* not to speak of them? Can he prove his assertion that "they are the fairest part of creation?" or can he prove that in this assertion he says nothing of the ladies? Give us the proofs, Mr. Buchanan.

# FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by R. BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

### PEEPS FROM UNDER A PARASOL.—NO. 3.

Look?

Which? How? Where?

Why *there;* don't you see? there's Potiphar Curtis.

Potiphar Curtis! ye gods, what a name! Pity my ignorance Reader, I had not then heard of the great "Howadji;" the only Potiphar I knew of being that much abused ancient who—but never mind him; suffice it to say, I had not heard of "Howadji;" and while I stood transfixed with his ridiculous cognomen, his coat tails, like his namesake's rival's, were disappearing in the distance. So I cannot describe him for you; but I give you my word, should I ever see him, to do him justice to the tips of his boots; which I understand are of immaculate polish. I have read his "Papers" though, and to speak in the style of the patronising critics who review lady-books, they are very well—*for a man.*

And speaking of books, here comes Walt. Whitman, author of "Leaves of Grass," which, by the way, I have not yet read. His shirt collar is turned off from his muscular throat, and his shoulders are thrown back as if even in that fine, ample chest of his, his lungs had not sufficient play-room. Mark his voice! rich—deep—and clear, as a clarion note. In the most crowded thoroughfare, one would turn instinctively on hearing it, to seek out its owner. Such a voice is a gift rare as it is priceless. A fig for phrenology! Let me but hear the *voice* of man or woman and I will tell you what stuff its owners are made of. One of the first things I noticed in New York, was the sharp, shrill, squeeking, unrefined, vixenish, *uneducated* voices of its women. How inevitably such disenchanting discord, breaks the spell of beauty!

Fair New Yorkers, keep your mouths *shut*, if you would conquer.

By what magnetism has our mention of voices conjured up the form of Dr. LOWELL MASON? And yet, there he is, as majestic as Old Hundred—as popular—and apparently as indestructible by *Time.* I would like to see a pupil of his who does not love him. I defy any one to look at this noble, patriarchal chorister (as he leads the *Congregational Singing* on the Sabbath, in Dr. Alexander's church) with an unmoistened eye. How fitting his position—and oh! how befitting God's temple, the praises of "*all* the people." Should some conquering hero, whose blood had been shed, free as water, for us and ours, revisit our shores, oh, who, as his triumphal chariot wheels rolled by, would *pass over to his neighbor for expression* the tumultuous gratitude with which his own heart was swelling?

That the mantle of the father should have fallen on the son, is not surprising; and they who have listened delightedly at Mr. William Mason's "Musical Matinee's" must bear witness how this inherited gift has been enriched by assiduous culture. Nature in giving him the ear and genius for a pianist, has also finished off his hands with such nicety, that, as they dart over the keys, they look to the observer like little snow-white scampering mice.

Ah—here is Dr. Skinner! no misnomer that: but what a logician—what an orator! Not an unmeaning sentence—not a superfluous word—not an unpolished period escapes him. In these days of superficial, botched, evangelical apprentice-work, it is a treat to welcome a master workman. Thank Providence, *all* the talent is not on the side of Beelzebub!

Vinegar cruets and vestry meetings! here come a group of Bostonians! Mark their puckered, spick-and-span self-complaisance! Mark that scornful gathering up of their skirts as they sidle away from that gorgeous Magdalen who, God pity and help her, *may* repent in her robes of unwomanly shame, but they in their "mint and anise," white-washed garments——*never!*

I close with a little quotation, not that it has anything to do with my subject, but that it is merely a poetical finish to my article. Some people have a weakness for poetry; I have; it is from the pen of the cant-hating HOOD.

> "A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,
> A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
> A London pride—in short, there be on earth
> A host of prides, some better, and some worse;
> But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
> The proudest swells *a self-elected saint.*
> To picture that cold pride, so harsh and hard,
> Fancy a peacock, in a poultry yard.
> Behold him in conceited circles sail,
> Strutting and dancing, and planted stiff
> In all his pomp and pageantry, as if
> *He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!"*

FANNY FERN.

## EQUALITY IN MARRIAGE.

BRIDGEPORT, April 8th, '56.

MR. LEDGER:—Tupper writes something like the following: "Be joined unto thine equal in marriage." Do you understand by this, that if a young man has the misfortune (as the world thinks) to be born poor, is he blamable if he wooes and weds a lady possessing wealth? Or, again: If a young man wishes to marry a lady of wealth and standing in society, while he possesses the latter but not the former, is he not justifiable in so doing, providing they agree?

Please answer through your next No. and oblige an attentive reader. JAMES.

In answer to our correspondent's queries, we would say, that, in our opinion, where a couple's hearts, and minds, and tastes are harmonious, a disparity of wealth and position will not be apt to render them unhappy; but where one of the parties is base-hearted and unrefined, unhappiness is certain. As to a young man's being *to blame* for courting and marrying a sweetheart richer than himself, we have only to say that when a man has married a woman, he himself best knows whether the act is blameable or one to be ashamed of.

## BRUTAL TEACHERS.

JERSEY CITY, April 8, 1856,

MR. LEDGER:—My son, a lad of fourteen years, who attends a public school in this city, was lately whipped very severely by his teacher, because he refused to give evidence against some of his schoolmates who had been detected in violations of the rules of the school. My son thinks his treatment was unjust and outrageous, and wishes me to send him to another school. He says he can never again respect his present teacher, or regard him with any feeling except that of aversion. What had I better do?

Truly yours. FATHER.

Your best course would probably be to investigate the matter thoroughly, and treat your your son with the same tender regard and inflexible justice that you would like to have extended toward yourself in the adjustment of a difficulty in which your feelings had become strongly enlisted. *Injustice* on the part of parents and teachers, has ruined many a bright boy and many a noble girl. When we were a lad, we one day united with a number of other boys, who resided in the same part of the village, to attack, and, if we could, whip, some boys who lived in the upper part of the town, after school hours. They had on the previous day whipped one of our associates, and we determined to punish them in return; and we did so, most effectually. After the opening of school, on the next morning, our rivals complained to the master, (a man named McNair,) who called us all up, and, after severely reprimanding us, he commenced to use the "rattan" still more severely on the hands and shoulders of each of us. When it came our turn, he scowled quite fiercely at us, as we happened to be one of the ringleaders, and commanded us to hold out our hand. We quietly asked, "What for?" He repeated the command more sternly, "Hold out your hand, Robert." We still refused, and again asked his reason. He wanted to know if we had not been engaged in the quarrel after we left school yesterday. In those days we were just mischievious enough to be fearless, and we replied that we had; but that we *did not consider that any of his business.* If we did wrong *in school hours*, while under his charge, he had a right perhaps to punish us; but for any misconduct *out of school hours*, we we were responsible to our parents alone. He now opened his eyes, and ordered us to take a seat, (with which order we complied,) while he went through almost half a day's work in blistering the hands and shoulders of our fellows. When he got through, he told us to remain in after school hours: we refused, on the ground that we were not guilty of any misconduct while in school, and at three o'clock we packed up our books to leave. He tried to stop us, and threatened to use the rattan, and did use it once. We then picked up a slate, and in a very excited manner told him that we would dash it at his face, if he dared to strike us again. He retreated, and we left the school unmolested. This occurred eighteen years ago, and, notwithstanding we can look back at the occurrence now with an unprejudiced eye, we are unable to see that we did wrong. *The day has gone by for school teachers to flog and scarify the backs of their pupils.* The parent who would submit to it, is a coward and a sneak, and unworthy to have a son. These are *our* sentiments; others may think as they choose.

## WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT?

What effect will the return of peace to Europe have upon the people of the United States? Though we are far removed from the seat of war we have felt its influence. It has kept our citizens in a state of continual excitement since its commencement; it has caused fluctuations and depression in our trade; it has raised and kept up the price of food, and these evils have been felt in every section of our country. Peace may bring a removal of these evils,—repose to our people, steadiness to our markets, and a reduction in the price of the necessaries of life. The war has not been carried on so long as to turn our commerce into new channels or to open new markets, which might be closed by the return of peace. Its termination, therefore, cannot have any effect upon the United States except through the money market, and possibly through the market for breadstuffs. Peace generally brings a reduction in the price of food, and the farmers of this country are in such comfortable circumstances that they will not grumble at this result. It will bring a larger amount of money into circulation, thus encouraging speculation. *Speculation* in stocks, real estate, railroads, &c., is the evil most to be feared during the ensuing year.

## AN EXPLANATION WANTED.

Although the public sometimes laughs at the childish observations of the sage of Brooklyn Heights, yet it must acknowledge him to be one of its greatest benefactors. The information which is imparted to the people by his brief, comprehensive letters, is useful and highly valuable. Eor every one who reads the Marine Journal or Market Report of our daily papers, there are ten who read M. Merriam's observations on the weather. To him we are indebted for the information that the temperature during the past month (March) did not rise as high as during any previous March for the last sixteen years. It did not rise above 47 degrees. The fact is simple, but who can estimate its importance? What will be the effect upon the earth of this low temperature during Spring? Shall we have a summer like that of 1843, when the temperature during March did not rise above 48 degrees? Will this low temperature be followed by an abundant crop, or by a dry summer, a failure, high prices, and a dearth? Merriam gives us the facts; who will explain them and predict the consequences of the low temperature of the present Spring?

"AN Act to Amend an Act:" To pick a man up, whom you have knocked down.

# CURRENT ITEMS.

A YOUNG Englishman, named Cornelius C. McAuliffe, recently committed suicide in this city, on account of a disappointment in love. He left a letter addressed to the coroner, in which he stated very coolly his reasons for the suicide, and his firm conviction that he had a perfect right to commit the act.

A MR. GREATOREX, of Herkimer county, N.Y., was recently attacked by an infuriated bull, pursued some distance, and pitched over a fence into a ditch. His only injury was a severe bruise on his head, which struck a root that protruded from the side of the ditch.

BARNUM, in a letter to the Providence Journal, says: "I loved to make money, but not better than I loved to spend it. I gave $20,000 per annum in charity for the last ten years, and, if I had not been a *jackass*, impulsive and *confiding*, I should not have been ruined."

THE Collins steamship ADRIATIC, which was recently launched by George Steers, her builder, is the largest vessel afloat. Steers, it will be remembered, was the builder of the famous yacht America, which beat all the boats of the Royal Yacht Club in 1852.

GENERAL WOOL has written a letter from Oregon, in which he pitches into the civilians of that territory, accusing them of provoking hostilities with the friendly Indians, and barbarously murdering their envoys who wished to make peace.

DR. ROBERT M. GRAHAM, of New Orleans, who was sent to the State's Prison a year ago, for killing Col. Loring at the St. Nicholas hotel in this city, has been pardoned by Gov. Clark.

A LOUISIANA paper states that a canoe containing a couple of slaves lately upset in a bayou, and that one of the negroes was swallowed by an alligator.

A FEW days since, a boy named Hanly, aged thirteen years, while attempting to dip a pail of swill from a barrel standing in the street, fell head first into the barrel, and was drowned.

Two Germans, who were scuffling near a large mush tub in a lager bier brewery, fell into the vat which was full of hot bier, and were scalded to death.

A FINE little boy, eight years of age, while at play, in Cleveland, (O.,) was lately attacked and torn in pieces by a bloodhound, owned by a neighbor of the child's father.

THE combined daily circulation of the New York Press is more than one-third greater than that of the Press of any other city on the globe.

M. DUBOIS, the physician to the Empress Eugenie, received *one hundred thousand dollars* as his fee for attending her Majesty on her *accouchement.*

THE expense of one trip of an ocean steamship is over forty thousand dollars.

# WIT AND HUMOR.

To look at the ladies' bonnets, you would imagine that the March winds had blown them all off, but it is no such thing; it is only an air the bonnets, in their conceit, give themselves. They fly off of their own accord, and we believe so stiff-necked are they in their generation, that not all the blowing upon in the world would be able to give them a different turn.

A NEAPOLITAN nobleman fought fourteen duels to prove that Dante was a greater poet than Ariosto. At his death-bed, a confessor, who was a great admirer of Ariosto, desired him to acknowledge the superiority of that poet. "Father," answered the dying man, "to tell the truth, I never read either Dante or Ariosto."

A LEGISLATOR in a Western State has introduced a bill providing for the flogging with a cat-o'-nine-tails of men who abuse their wives; "for," said he, "it is no more than fair that a miserable *dog* of a husband should have to settle with the *cat.*

A NOTE, of which the following is a verbatim copy, was recently sent to the shop of a druggist in the neighborhood of Barnsley: "Cer,—I hev a Bad Kowld and em Hill in my Bow Hills and Hev lost my Happy Tight."

ISN'T it singular that mineral waters are only beneficial to the wealthy? In all our experience we never knew a physician to advise a *poor* man to go to Saratoga, or any other watering place.

MR. FERGUSON says there is no country in the world where wives are more worshiped than they are in France. He regrets to say, however, that all the adoration comes from somebody else's husband.

A LADY'S dress is becoming wonderfully simplified—for instance, putting on her bonnet and taking it off her head again are done now by one and the same movement.

IF you are a very precise man, and wish to be certain of what you get, never marry a girl named Ann, for we have the authority of Lindley Murray, and others, that "Ann is an indefinite article."

A WESTERN jury, holding an inquest over a man who died in prison, returned the following verdict: "The way of the transgressor is hard, and deceased died from natural causes."

THE Russian Bear began the late war by attempting to seize on the *whole* of Turkey, and now it is begging for a *peace.*

WHY does a husband always cost so much more than a wife? Because a bride is generally *given away*, while a husband is always *sold.*

## CAN IT BE SO?

The theory that our winters have increased in length and severity during the last eight or nine centuries is supported by some remarkable facts. The Northmen who discovered Greenland about the year 983 gave it its present name on account of the rich verdure which clothed its mountains and its valleys. Formerly, it produced trees measuring two to three feet in diameter; now, it is rare to see a bush exceeding a man's height, or thicker than the wrist. Formerly Iceland was covered with mighty forests; now only stunted grass can bear the cold of its winters. The roving Northmen who visited the shores of this continent as early as the tenth century were charmed with the mild, genial air, the rich vegetation, especially with the luxuriant vines of New England. They called the country, even including the sea-border of Maine, Vinland or the land of vines. It is therefore probable that, eight centuries ago, the climate of New York was as mild as that of Central and Northern Italy at the present date, where oranges grow in the gardens at Christmas, and the air is mild and balmy during the greater part of the winter.

### THINK NOT, SWEET ONE.

BY FINLEY JOHNSON.

Think not, sweet one, that the happy birds
Will sport in the air forever,
Or the flowers bright will have no blasts
Their beautiful buds to sever;
For the fairest roses earliest fade
While the summer winds are sighing,
And the sweetest birds are oft laid low
Which high in mid air are flying.

Think not as you gaze on yonder moon
That no shadow shall come before it,
Or because the lake is sweet and calm
That safe you may venture o'er it;
For the moon so bright shall slowly wane,
Or a shadowy cloud shall hide it,
And the lake be lash'd to such fiery foam
That no vessel could safely ride it.

Think not, my love, that the syren hope
Sings ever a truthful story,
Or that when the evening spreads her wings,
No dawn shall obscure her glory;
For the brightest eve gives birth to dawn,
As we gaze with joy and wonder,
And as sweet hope on her lyre sings
A hand snaps the chords asunder.

# NORMA DANTON;

OR THE

# ORPHAN OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

### A TALE OF FRAUD AND REVENGE.

### CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

"There was an awful silence, and I saw all faces growing dark around me; for many had come in, drawn there, doubtless, by my frantic appeal. The young bride fainted in her father's arms, and was borne to an inner room. Paul approached me, and hissed some words between his clenched teeth which I could not hear, and stay my curse. Maddened past all endurance, I breathed an imprecation upon his head—there, on my bended knees, with our child smiling up in my face from the carpet where I laid it down—that curdled the blood of those who heard it fall from my writhing lips. The guests were filled with horror, and Paul Deshler's face grew livid with rage and hatred, as he ordered the servant to turn me from the house.

"'Keep back your menials,' I said, loftily, as I snatched the child in my arms; and, looking down on the awe-stricken lacqueys, from my full hight, till they dared not lay a finger on me, I said to him, in tones of writhing disdain, pointing to the child: 'I hate everything of you except the drops of your blood in her veins, and those I love, and shall ever love, because they are *hers*. I am as far above your contempt as you are below honor.' Then slowly retracing my way down stairs, I quitted the house.

"In the reaction, the violence of my anguish knew no bounds. I was secured as a mad woman, and conveyed by some humane hand to a charitable institution for the sick, and weeks of black blankness passed unheeded by me. But days of restoration came at intervals, with pangs that sent me shrieking back to the dark shores of madness. I thought there was a gladness, somewhere, but had no strength to guess what it was. One day, as in a dream, the sweet, soft image of my delicate child floated within the waste of recollection.

"'My child! my child!' I cried; 'bring me my child.' They told me she had died two months before. I was alone. I was bereft of the only thing left me on earth, to love.

"It was better. She has escaped a miserable world, in which she could only have had her mother's shame for her dower.

"I was pronounced free from the danger of relapse, and sent kindly on my way; but the threads of my life were tangled and confused, and my powers shattered. For two years, I have not known a well hour; but I've paid my last ferriage on the river of chance. Let the weather-beaten, storm-tossed craft float out to eternity's ocean."

A few hours later, it was said by the anxious watchers around poor Tollet's bed, "she is sinking rapidly." The fatal cough had ceased entirely, and that was a sure symptom of approaching dissolution.

All through the next day, the flesh wrestled with the spirit. Towards evening she brightened a little, and asked that a man of God might be called, to speak some comforting words to her fainting, failing soul.

"Whom shall I call?" asked Mrs. Joars.

"It is immaterial; any good man," the dying girl replied with difficulty."

Strange are the attractions of destiny; stranger are the mysterious ways of that divine *something*, which the Christian calls Providence, the Heathen, Fate.

It was a soft, rich, mellow, autumn twilight, and the first, faint stars darted their radiance through the low, uncurtained window. The delicately-defined features of the sick girl, sharpened by disease, stood out, white and glistening, through the gathering gloom. The dews of death were settling amid her thin locks, and her eye wore a varying light. She bent its brilliant flashes enquiringly on the clergyman bending his head as he entered the low portal, and with a sudden start, exclaimed:

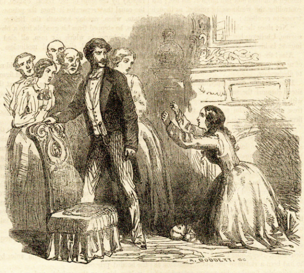
"Almighty Providence! it is he!"

An ashen hue overshadowed the face of the Divine, as he looked on the dying girl. She feebly put out her hand, and said:

"It is you, then; all is past now. I am going to that long home for which you first taught me to prepare, but——"

"Speak lower—for the love of Heaven!" said the pastor, as he bent his ear close to her lips, to catch the words but too distinctly uttered for the peace of his agitated soul. And there the victim lay gasping in her death pangs beneath his stifling presence. He who had moulded so her pliant youth, that she knew not evil from good—he who had led her to the light but to thrust her back again to outer darkness. Verily, how will he answer to the Judge for that lost lamb.

Mrs. Joars brought the first clergyman she found, to administer to the spiritual wants of the dying; and through the ministerial changes always occurring, the Rev. Mr. Stillworth had received a call, and was settled in the populous city where poor Tollet was toiling out her last breath in indigence. It was quite possible that she was not aware of his location, as she did not allude to it in the recital of her history to Celia.



TOLLET APPEALING TO PAUL DESHLER'S AFFIANCED NOT TO ROB HER OF HER LOVER.

His heart was touched, and his soul troubled, but that would not recall what had been. He knelt beside her bed, and prayed fervently, and with a contrite and broken spirit, for forgiveness for error and neglect of duty to this lamb of his flock, so long lost—so gladly found; yea, he wrestled mightily with God, for His grace to fall on her, in her extremity, and as there is efficacy in prayer, the sob of the penitent wronger may have reached the ever merciful Father.

As she listened to his voice of supplication, a dream of the old, familiar faces seemed to gleam upon her mind, with a sweet and hallowing influence. The original purity of youth flitted back from its world-wanderings and settled on her brow, crowning her with angelic glory; and with the teachings of the Blessed Saviour, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," her features sank into the rigidity of death, and angels bore her long-tried spirit to be embraced in the infinite mercy of the Father of nature.

### CHAPTER XXI.

Lilla Blossom, though beyond all precedent in the history of lilies, spun and wove—thoughts in her half-enlightened little cabin, as she pulled the long, strong linen thread through and through the buttons' eyes, and stitched them snugly and neatly to the garment she had made; the bright little needle flashed swiftly to and fro, directed and controlled by those smooth taper fingers; and those watchful earnest eyes never once looked up to see what the others were doing, or what all the magpie chattering was about; she had her own knotty lines to unravel, that bothered her young head exceedingly. She thought sometimes she had better tell Jamison the story of her name, and get him to find out all about her brother; but then, in her strange way of reasoning, she hesitated. She didn't know his rough, old, strong, weak, hard, soft heart as well as she might, and fell afraid to talk to him, or to any one, of her own affairs; besides, she was quite sure her brother was safe and would find her out when he came home. Meanwhile, she would be diligent and painstaking, silent and hopeful, till that time should arrive; and she dreamed such beautiful dreams there was marvellous comfort in them—she didn't count the thousands and thousands of stitches her little hands had put, any more than the husbandman counts the grains he scatters in the bosom of the earth to germinate, bud, blossom, and ripen for the fruitful harvest.

She was a strange young thing to be comforting herself all alone, from the instinct of love and the divine prophecy of dreams, to build in secret gladness a world of hope peopled with lovely thoughts of her own creation; and she would not let them go till they had blessed her. And thus she passed along, after the first shock of disappointment assailed her, murmuring tender condolence from her musical lips, binding her soft, expectant soul with thongs of patience, holding a silver shield of innocent hopes to catch and reflect again the warm sunlight of heaven.

One day she stayed for a moment to mark how the great work went on where the church was building, and her mind seemed to grow and expand as it progressed towards completion; for every day a stronger, deeper light beamed in her seraphic eyes, as she lifted them in holy contemplation to the majestic towering spire, which pointed with a lofty significance to that boundless distance whither the rapt spirit ever longs to soar. Thus she caught mental glimpses of divine mysteries, and the whispers of time revealed her to herself.

She nodded kindly to the little newsboy every morning, and her intelligent smiles were to him a language he might translate but could not trust himself to speak.

William Danton, too, looked silently and moodily on that high sentinel of heaven-ward thought. Oh! that one half hour should so keep separate those kindred hearts; that he should tread out the very print her foot had left upon the dusty pavement, and never know it. Yet a soft thrill of rapture swept the chords of feeling as he stood there. Why could he not perceive it was the delicate aroma which her dear presence left to fold with tenderest meaning all his being. Alas, for the stupidity of matter! We rarely become conscious of the angel influences striving to lift the vail from our material forms, and show us the vast powers our subtler essence holds to check and enleash the other by its half Godlike will.

"Eyes have ye but ye see not, ears have ye but ye hear not."

William was taking his farewell look, for in a few days he would be launched again on the ocean world, to strike amain at the huge hard waves plying their frenzied steeps against the sailor's rolling fold. He recked not of the perils of the encounter, but with warm longings impatiently told the hours when he should taste a seaman's joy and feel the briny foam dashing his hardy brow.

With the firm step of youth, he turned from the spot where he drew his first breath, and walked out into the cool suburbs, with a half design of seeing his uncle's palace home, of which, in his discourse amongst men, he had heard much. His intention had been to wait upon his uncle and tell him plainly his opinion of his proceedings towards his sister, and perhaps compel him to administer tardy justice to her and himself, but when he found her not he lost the cue to his design, and had no more a wish to meet him. Still, he would look upon the home where all within whose veins throbbed kindred blood were dwellers.

A carriage passed him. He glanced inside, and recognised his cousin May and her mother. May leaned forward as if half conscious she had met those large, flashing eyes before, but sank listlessly back again as if undeceived—but she thought of her cousin, and talked of him to her mother.

Along he went, absorbed in thought, for the sight of those faces had stirred the full fountain of memory. He was living over his childhood's days again; there mingled other thoughts, and his pace quickened. He reached his uncle's domain. The tall lindens saluted him with wavy grandeur as he stopped under their shade, and the proud hemlocks trod the invisible air with a gayer emotion as he approached. But the lofty elms murmured, muttered, and moaned, solemn mysteries each to the other, as the shivering breeze ran through them. Do sylvan spirits still dwell amid their branches, with greater knowledge of our narrow span than the might of man can master?

The foreign gardener was glad to show so intelligent a visitor over his employer's grounds, and when he found that he was a traveller and spoke several Eastern languages understandingly if not fluently, and knew all his foreign plants by name, and had tasted the choicest fruits of many lands, he conducted him to an arbor set round with large-leaved aspen trees, slender and tall, opening from which was a hot house, constructed on a peculiar plan, containing the rarest and most costly exotics from all parts of the habitable globe, arranged with a magnificence little inferior to that of the renowned Nezim of the East. Within the spacious enclosure, summer forever reigned, with songs of birds, and sounds of lulling waters, and sparkling fountains, throwing their glittering shafts afar and glancing down again in the marble basins, alive with gold fish and others of almost fabulous beauty, shape and color. The light of the sun reached this place through an artificial heaven, and the sands over which these finny creatures disported were gathered from their native seas and bays, in the far climes of Ind.

Mr. Danton's gardener was a man of science in more than one profession; he brought the knowledge of the arts to bear upon the secrets of nature, and here was the first practical result of long years of study and theoretical speculation. Mr. Danton generally allowed him ample scope to bring to fruitage some of his wildest dreams of the nature of plants, birds and fishes, with wonderful and artistic combinations of air, light, heat and water.

William Danton drank his full of the exquisite beauty around him, and when the polite foreigner handed him a Turkish cup of fragrant Mocha, and a long Turkish pipe, at the same time inviting him aside into a room furnished with oriental splendor, beguiled by his interesting conversation he forgot, for a time, that he was breaking his fast unasked on the grounds of his Uncle James.

The steam of the richly flavored coffee appealed powerfully to his senses. The agreeable repast over, he bade his entertainer adieu, and quitting the garden, gained the high road, intending to return to the city by a different route from that by which he came. All along the road lay the paradisaical homes of that Eden of homes, and at short distances from each other the tree-crowned hills stood reverently beautiful. He roved to catch familiar views of the near townships, and here and there stole glimpses of the far, dark sea, while close at hand stretched, up and down, and to and fro, the veins of iron which bore the fiery heart, beating and leaping in its headlong way and rolling on with its power, interest and impulse of untold wealth, bone, mucle and brains, cunning in devices to get gold and make the land again teem where nature had been prodigal. Down again from the hill top, wandering son, for the valley needs thee!

Ursula Leshman and her mother were taking a drive that morning in a low one-horse chaise. The vehicle was constructed with direct reference to the comfort of the invalid, who was too timid to ride with any other driver than her husband or daughter. Tempted by the beauty of the day, they had gone further than usual, and were now on their homeward way, moving at a quick rate, for the invalid complained of sudden faintness. They were approaching a slope in the road, and at the foot of the hill was one of those numerous railroad crossings, with the warning signal high above it—"Look out for the engine while the bell rings." They were fast nearing the spot, and Ursula looked this way and that to see if a train were coming. Yes, close at hand—which way she could not see, for the bend in the road was sudden on either side. She thought she had made sure of a safe distance, until the smoke and noise of the great spouting engine should pass, for it must be very near. She felt her mother leaning against her, and glancing at the beloved face discovered she had fainted. In the moment of fear and anxiety her grasp of the reins slackened, the horse gave a sudden start, and dragged them from her hand beyond the hope of recovery. They were gone, and the affrighted animal was dashing into the very jaws of destruction.

Angel of God! they will be borne on to the track and trampled to death by that giant of unwieldy power. One instant more and they will be dashed in atoms under his hoof of fire.

Ursula as she resigned herself to the awful fate before her, was conscious that some one on the other side of the track was pressiag forward with more than human speed to save, or to attempt to save them. She had grasped in vain to recover the reins and control the unruly animal, with the faint hope of turning him from the imminent danger; but it seemed too late. She closed her eyes for the last time, with her fainting mother clasped in her arms, when she felt a great shock as if the strength of twenty men had thrust the furious horse back from that perilous point, and felt him shivering and senseless beneath the strong arms that held him, while the screaming horror passed and they were safe. She gazed on her preserver's face in speechless wonder, at the daring peril he had risked to rescue them from a death so terrible.

It was William Danton who had thus risked life and limb to preserve the two helpless women from a result terrible to think of.

'Pray, sir," said Ursula, "take a seat in the carriage and drive us to some place where I may procure assistance for my mother, for I am weak and helpless, from the fright that possessed me."

Quietly he did as she requested. Mrs. Leshman's timely faint had been her preservation from the knowledge of any near danger, else she might have died with terror. She now slowly revived to know that they had passed through that which could not be spoken of without a suffocating heart, and quickly learned that he who sat beside her was the savior of hers and her daughter's life.

"There are no words that I am capable of uttering," said Mr. Leshman when, holding his rescued treasures once more in his arms, he listened to the story of their fearful danger from Ursula's lips—"no words, no acts by which I can express to you, young man, my gratitude."

"Oh! sir, don't speak of it," said William, 'I did but what every manly sentiment of my soul compelled me to do. Not to me, sir, but to God give the thanks," he said solemnly; "I was but the instrument."

"True, true, most true," said the happy father; "and that thought will ever make you near and precious to us. Unfold to me your hopes—your aims in life; call on me as on a father, for God has given me but this one child, and but for you I should be now childless and broken-hearted—all that I love, snatched from me in one fell moment, had not the Great Father appointed you the guardian of my only treasuies, my wife, my child."

Tears of sympathy stood in every eye as thus the father spoke, as he clasped his loved ones again to his heart.

Little by little Mr. Leshman drew from William Danton the simple history of his life, and he rejoiced that it had fallen in his way to be so nobly acquainted with the son of his old college companion, for now he knew his name he traced with facility the features of that well-remembered face.

William had never experienced so much real pleasure as in those few days, during which the greater part of his time was passed with the Leshmans. Ursula charmed him with her sweet songs, while to her father he was ever welcome; for he enjoyed the fresh, honest mind of the young sailor, so frank and independent; and they all grieved with him for the loss of his lovely sister, and he was dear as a brother and son to the merchant's happy family; for an acquaintance with such a beginning as theirs quickly ripens into intimacy.

He had thought to leave his native shore on this second voyage without one friendly voice to say, "God speed." Not so, for Ursula and her father came down to visit him on board his ship the day he sailed; and many delightful souvenirs to remind him of their love when far away, were smuggled, without his knowledge, into his state room, by the fair pirate Ursula, aided doubtless by the Captain and her father in her mischievous designs.

Her bright hazel eyes filled with tears when she said good bye, and her father wrung the young man's hand with a grip of cordial love.

Promises to write were already exchanged, and they were faithfully kept.

On the stormy seas again. The wild winds howled through the rigging. The thought of Ursula's smile tempered the storm and softened the wind to his touch. He breasted the sea while an alluring hope sat smiling at the helm.

Meanwhile James Danton set the wily snare, secure from observation, in which he would entrap the unsuspecting merchant. Mr. Leshman was deeply tainted with the prevailing mania for speculation, so rife amongst business men even of the highest character and confidential worth. Great capitalists were spending vast amounts, buying railroad stocks, and the excitement on change was almost incredible. The successful wire pulling of the few knowing ones to further their own interests and effect the downfall of the unwary, was carried to an extent almost unprecedented in the business mart.

There must be victims where the underminers are skilful and possessed of unbounded wealth, together with the ugly determination to ruin one who could not be reached by other means than such as might be achieved by the arch enemy himself determined through malice prepense and a plan of revenge cherished for years with the vigilance of a fiend incarnate.

Mr. Leshman thought he saw a chance for a fair investment in a railroad stock then in the market, which his contemporaries seemed to have overlooked. Inquiry, instigated by parties secretly appointed to report progress, influenced him to make an agreement to deliver at a low figure an immense amount to parties with whom he was treating, at a date not far distant. But by some oversight a heretofore trusty agent employed in the the transaction was overreached. Some other capitalists had stepped in and bought up all the stock in the market, quoted at sixty, which he had agreed to deliver at a much lower rate, and on the date of his agreement the stock stood at ninety.

It seemed like a chance, but was in effect a grand stroke of politic villainy brought to a successful issue by the cunning schemes of bitter enmity. The merchant must deliver according to agreement the amount promised, or make up to the parties for the rise on the stock. It swept him clean of the wealth he had spent a life time in amassing, and in the crash of his fortunes many were involved. As the intelligence flew from man to man of the involvement of the great house of Leshman & Co. the panic spread with it. It sent dread of impending consequences to many a modest trader, who had piled his small treasure of wealth beneath the shelter of those gold dropping eaves.

The overthrow of Mr. Leshman's business reputation was terrible and complete. It paralysed his faculties, and in a fit of insanity caused by the horrors of his position, he committed suicide. With his own hand he closed the ledger of life, unable to gaze longer on the grand sum-total he owed to humanity. He left the account unsettled, preferring, in mad trust to be weighed in the just balance of the infinite, leaving his memory to the mercy of his fellow men.

Write on his stone, "He kept the golden rule."

The creditors generally desired to make a reservation of interest in favor of the widow and daughter of the deceased which they unhesitatingly declined.

The tender, delicate Ursula and her mother had come to drink the first of the many-fountained bitterness of life; not from a golden chalice, for the gourd grew beside the hot and dusty thoroughfare where their toiling feet must tread clad in the wearing sandals of poverty. The gourd shall hereafter be the drinking cup whence the patient lips must drain the sickening drops. She who dispensed with so liberal a hand to the tired gleaners in the wide fields of toil, must now glean for herself, and be content to eat of the trampled herb which the careless steps of those who wander in gladness have crushed, unnoticed, in their gleeful march. And thus the chapter of life changes, as we turn the rustling leaves of time.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

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New Haven, April 10, 1856.

Mr. Ledger:—I am keeping company with a young man who is of irreproachable character, but my mother has taken a great dislike to him, and says I shan't marry him, and father says he don't care anything about it, but will agree to anything that mother will agree to. Now, ought I to give him up? or *what* had I better do? Please answer as soon as possible, and much oblige A SUBSCRIBER.

Filial affection and obedience are among the most charming traits of character, which it is possible for a young lady to exhibit, and we would advise our fair young correspondent to practice them in her present perplexity. She may depend upon it, that that will be the surest road to the attainment of her wishes, and the most certain means of securing future happiness. She and her lover can undoubtedly afford to respect her mother's prejudices, which they can the soonest cure by such exhibitions of delicacy and kindness as we have above hinted at.

### A LOVE SONG FOR THE SEASON.

BY H. ROWLAND BROWN.

Good night, good night, my little one,
  But come not now to the door,
For since with the day pass'd away the bright sun,
  The winds have blown cold on the moor.
So cold that the stars seem to shiver,
  Far up in the clear blue sky ;
And frozen so hard is the river,
  That sung when it bounded by.
    So, come not now to the door, pretty one.
      Though Love may the heart keep warm ;
    For cold the winds blow through the drifting snow,
      And so chilling is Winter's arm !

Good night, good night, my little one,
  But come not now to the door,
But pray for the day when the glorious Sun
  Will shine on the flowers once more ;
For the sweet, bright time, Love's fairy time,
  When flowers scent the breath of June,
And streams sing sweeter songs than my rhyme
  To the stars and silvery moon.
    Oh ! then, will we sit by the door, pretty one,
      'Neath roses of crimson and white,
    When the toils of the weary day are done,
      And sing with the birds, "Good night."

## THE GIPSEY'S PROPHECY.

### A TALE OF VENICE.

BY BELL BRAMBLE.

The clouds had rolled away, and the clear light of an Italian moon shone brightly on the broad sweep of the Lagoon, as straggling seen between dome and tower, or resting in calm repose on the massive marble palaces, as a young man attired in the plain black worn by the patrician order in Venice, descended the steps of the Zuvalli Palace, and gliding towards the pier, drew the plumed cap farther upon his gloomy brow, beneath which flashed eyes in keeping with the inflexible resolve that curved his haughty, determined lips ;—yet, despite the unmistakeable unrelenting of his stern features, Antonio Zuvalli was eminently handsome. Seeing his friend, Pietro Pisano approach, his dark visage became suddenly lighted up with all the fire of intelligence, and witchery of smile, that alone was wanting to complete its manly beauty ; and pushing aside the shading plume that had darkened his contracted brow, the noble arch of an intellectual forehead, and erewhile compressed lips, wore a relaxed and winning grace, as he saluted him with "Ha, Pietro! well met after so long an interval. How have you employed yourself the while, Sir Troubadour ?"

"Gallantry and love, as usual."

"What new divinity now, Pietro ?"

"If you come to-night to the Moretti Palace, you shall see and judge for yourself."

And they separated ; Antonio shaping his course by the circuitous labyrinth that terminated in the Pallazza, while Pietro, calling to a gondolier, was conveyed to another part of the City of the Sea.

That night, the balconies of the Moretti Palace presented to the passers in the various gondolas a brilliant spectacle. The tall windows were radiant with the blaze of chandeliers, seen through silken draperies festooned with rarest flowers, giving to their gaze the groups of high-born dames and gallant cavaliers, where the hum of conversation and lively peals of laughter of the plumed and jewelled occupants of the balcony, resounded with the ball-room strains, echoed by the "light fantastic" feet of the dancers.

Early in the evening, the steel prow of a gondola grated upon the marble steps leading to the water-gate of the palace, from which Pietro Pisano leaping out, so stationed himself within the gate as to be able to see all who might enter, while he carefully adjusted his own drooping plume, so as effectually to conceal his features ; nor did he alter his immovable position, while crowds of ceaseless continuity passed to the scene of festivity, until, starting as if with an electric shock, he sprang forward to meet two ladies who, veiled, and assisted from their gondola by Antonio Zuvalli, were ascending the water flight of steps leading to the entrance gate, where he had waited. Darting forward, he whispered, "Guillia!" to which "Pietro!" was responded in soft, musical accents, as he raised the dark plume that had before shaded his features. Placing her arm within his, they rapidly traversed the marble pavement, then up the noble flight of steps, and traversing the magnificently-lighted hall, the young lady pushed aside the silken curtain of a folding door at its extremity, and disappeared. Meantime, Antonio Zuvalli conducted the magnificent Lady Villiers, the English aunt of the fair Guillia Monti, to the hall leading to the maskers' robing room above, where he waited until the door's rich hangings were again pushed aside, and the two radiantly beautiful women, now divested of their veils, and sparkling with jewels, appeared ; when, to his surprise, Pietro Pisano sprang forward from behind an enormous Etruscan vase, (the Saracenic pedestal of which he had been minutely scrutinizing,) and again tendering his arm to Guillia, advanced with her towards the ball-room ; while Antonio, with a brow dark as erebus, conducted Lady Villiers, who slowly followed ; so that to augment his rage, when the blaze of a stronger light flooded round them, and music, dancing, and the hum of voices met their entrance, neither Guillia, nor her cavalier Pietro, was to be seen.

"Diavolo!" muttered Antonio, fiercely, between his clenched teeth. "Pietro Pisano the favored suitor of Guillia Monti. Never!" and his brow darkened, and the curve of his patrician lip grew more inflexible in its outline, as he added : "She is mine—my affianced one ; and I will claim her in spite of every obstacle raised by earth or heaven !"

Then making a violent effort to appear tranquil, he joined Lady Villiers in her mirthful sallies, in the brilliant masquerade, where splendid Venetian mirrors gave back the festive scene, where shone the beauty and nobility of the City of the Sea.

Complaining of the heat, Lady Villiers seated herself on an ottoman by a window opening on a balcony ; and there, standing side by side, looking out on the placid waters below, stood Pietro and Guillia—her flushed cheek and pleased smile attesting that his low-breathed theme was not displeasing ; and as the vibrations of her fan swept back the raven curls, giving to Antonio occasional glimpses of the love-lit glance raised to another's face, albeit his own lip smiled, yet did the contracted brow and flushed eye too plainly denote the fierce volcanic fires that burned within. Finding the effect to shake off his moodiness unsuccessful, he strode away, and mingling among the masked throng, was accosted by a gipsey, who offered to tell his fortune. Looking at the lines of his hand, she said :

"The task to tell your destiny is easy ; you will find it more difficult to guard against its dangers. The ways of love and politics are intricate, and slippery the steps of the Zuvalli Palace, while the Lagoon is deep."

"How! does your art foretell that I will be drowned ?" But the gipsey had disappeared, and after a vain search, Antonio returned to the ball-room, where stationing himself by Lady Villiers, he asked Guillia's hand for the next dance ; and as he led her forth, his handsome face assumed its brightest smile, as he spoke in the low and winning tone none other had ever resisted. But though she answered mechanically, her eye wandered to where Pietro stood, and noting this, Antonio became equally silent and abstracted. Handing her back to her seat, he excused himself on the plea of the heat, and passing out upon a balcony, was seen no more during the evening.

When the maskers began to disperse at the sound of the distant Campanaille bell, and Pietro, having escorted Guillia and Lady Villiers to their gondola, was about to seek his own, he was startled by his arm being rudely grasped, and looking round, saw Antonio Zuvalli by his side.

"I would speak a word with you, Pietro."

"A dozen, if you please, *Amico Mio*. Here have I been using all my eloquence in your behalf with the handsome widow, when you chose to disappear so suddenly. Her ample jointure will save you from farther necessity for calling upon the Jews of the Rialto, whose assistance has already helped you to anticipate considerably, or report says wrong, from your expected inheritance."

"I beg that you find some other topic for your amusement, than my attentions to an old painted dowager."

"Right gladly I'll change the subject, if you'll find me another as good. A wealthy English peeress, come to Italy on the invitation of her brother-in-law, the Marquis Monti, to chaperon her niece, his daughter. *Old*, indeed! Lady Villiers hath yet time sufficient, wherein to consult her own inclinations, and the interest of whoever is fortunate enough to 'win and wear' her."

"By Heavens! Antonio, but this is too much. What is Lady Villiers to me, who am, to all intents and purposes, the affianced husband of Guillia Monti ? We were betrothed from our very cradles, by our parents, whose authority in such cases we are bound to hold absolute ; and I have awaited you here, to ask for the *ferronia* that had clasped back her braided tresses, and which, slipping in the dance, fell—I saw it all. You raised the chain, and placed it in your vest ; and now, as her affianced husband, I insist on you restoring the clasp to me."

"What! *this?*" and Pietro drew the glittering chain from his breast,—"resign what I have *her* permission to retain ? Never!"

"Resign it instantly, or——" and Antonio's sword gleamed in the moonlight, as snatching at the chain ere Pietro was aware of his intention, he had secured the *ferronia*, and placed it deep in his own vest.

A struggle ensued, during which both parties proceeded from blows to disentangling their swords from beneath the folds of their cloaks ; when Antonio, ere Pietro had time to unsheath his, plunged his blade, already freed from the scabbard, into the breast of his antagonist, who, uttering a faint moan, fell prostrate at his feet.

At that late hour, the deed was unseen, and though in the first moment of consternation, Antonio stood irresolute, in the next he was kneeling down and calling to his victim, in a low whisper. Receiving no answer, nor perceiving the slightest pulsation of life, he turned the pale face to the light, and to his horror became aware that he had murdered the ill-starred Pisano. Springing to his feet, and unlocking his gondola, he brought it alongside the pier, where the lifeless body of his victim lay. Placing the body in the boat, he seized the oars, and rowed for very life towards the deepest part of the Lagoon. Then dropping the oars, he raised his hands to his head distractedly, and clutched them in his hair convulsively. But his habitual promptitude and energy returned, as he heard the sound of approaching oars and voices, and shoving the body into the water, he sprang to his oars, and darted away with the rapidity of lightning—struggling with almost superhuman strength to accellerate his speed, until the prow of the gondola grazed the steps of his ancestral home, when overtaxed nature failed, and with a suppressed groan, he fell back into the bottom of the boat.

Three days from that time, Antonio, meeting with the Marquis Monti, was invited by the old noble to call on Guillia, whom he represented as suffering under unaccountably depressed spirits. Accepting a seat in the Marquis's gondola, he found himself in a few minutes in a saloon of the Monti Palace. Guillia being summoned by her father, shortly appeared, and the conversation became insensibly drawn to the mysterious disappearance of Pietro Pisano.

"Have you seen him, Antonio ?" asked Guillia of Zuvalli, who paled and shuddered as though a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet ; but controlling the weakness, he replied, as though trying to recollect :

"Not since the night of the ball, *Bella Signorina*, I believe ; but why do you take such an interest in his fate, ma Bella ?"

Alas ! the consciousness that "makes cowards of us all" caused the once high-souled Antonio to dissimulate.

Before Guillia could reply, the arrival of visitors changed the subject, and shortly after, with a look of reproachful tenderness at his mistress, and a respectful reverence to Lady Villiers, Antonio took his leave.

Among the visitors was the Count Vidali, who was the first who had been able to throw any light on the impenetrable mystery of Pietro's sudden disappearance. He stated that, returning with his daughter from the masque at the Moretti Palace, although near when a man was thrown into the Lagoon, the haziness of the night prevented them from seeing either the assassin or the man, who rose struggling on the waves, until their gondola came nearly upon him ; when, by the aid of the gondolier, he succeeded in drawing him from the water into the boat, but the struggle of drowning added to the severity of the wound, left him still in a precarious state. Supposing from his rich attire that he had been a victim of the State, inasmuch as the valuables found on his person set aside all suspicion of cupidity, he had feared to say aught of the matter, until he heard that the young Pietro Pisano was unaccountably missing.

While Pietro yet lay delirious in the Vidali Palace, Antonio called upon the Count's niece, the beautiful daughter of the Senator Gamba. Very beautiful was Rosalba, whose passions, however, were impulsive, violent, and ungovernable. She had long loved the handsome Zuvalli with all the uncontrollable warmth of her impassioned nature, which had at one time been as ardently duplicated by his own ; but of late her jealousy of the gentle Guillia had led to many violent outbursts of temper, coupled with rash threats, proving palpably that the love burning so intensely within her volcanic breast, might easily be converted into as revengeful a hate. No uncommon specimen was Rosalba of Venetian women, whose stormy passions nurtured beneath the burning suns of their glowing Italian skies, are rendered susceptible of such frenzied outbursts of revenge as set the non-resistance of gentler natures at defiance.

While Antonio conversed with her in the sentimental strain he had been accustomed to indulge in, Rosalba noticed the links of a heavy *cable chain*, such as were used as *ferronias*, to clasp back the redundancy of tresses, confining them in Grecian volutes at the back of the head. The rare workmanship of the links drew her attention, and in her usual impetuous way, she exclaimed :

"Oh, Antonio! I could not have believed another gift would have been worn in your breast !"

While disclaiming the charge, Antonio strove to thrust the chain out of sight, when, as though Fate was against him, it fell, and Rosalba seizing it, read, graven deep on the jewelled clasp, "Guillia."

"And you visit me, and indulge in expressions of love, while wearing the gifts of another ?" and the plague spot deepened on her brow, as she added with vehemence, "You are no longer mine ; but beware ! Deprived of the illusion that made earth a paradise, I could be a very fiend to work your ruin ; so beware how you trifle with me, Antonio !"

To her passionate questions he gave evasive replies and revealed to her only as much as he deemed prudent of the affair by which he became possessed of the so fatal bauble.

"Art sure, *Carrisimo*, that is all ? On your word of honor, is that all ?—for, *I hold your life in my hands !*"

He saw his error when too late, and now tried by all the arts of which long practice had made him consummate master, to soothe the jealous girl, closing with : "And now, Rosalba, do not farther harrow my feelings by asking for particulars ; let it suffice that I had the trinket from Pietro, for to *him* she gave it."

She appeared satisfied, but the affair was not forgotten, when she shortly after learned that it was as Guillia's affianced husband, he had become Pietro's antagonist.

Antonio's father, the Count Zuvalli, representative of a noble Venetian family, had, in consequence of a series of political intrigues, been lately excluded from all participation in the Councils of State. Naturally aspiring, the aged Senator had not tamely submitted to expulsion, but set about to devise measures, (wherein he found Antonio a ready and prompt co-operator,) to effect such a revolution as might advance his own personal interests and aggrandisement. Many of these had already come to the knowledge of the Senators Vidali and Gamba ; and now that the young noble had dared to trifle with the only child of the latter, himself a widower, and devotedly attached to his beautiful, high-spirited daughter, the patrician father resolved that the slight shewn his child should be fearfully avenged ; for, though as one of the dreaded Ten, he caused his condemnation to come through the lion's mouth, still were Antonio's impetuous passions the source of his doom.

The dreaded Council of Ten was at this time omnipotent in Venice. One of its most influential members, the Senator Gamba, had been led into debt by long and continuous extravagance, and all his hopes rested on maintaining his authority as a Senator, with its emoluments. Speculating, officious, intriguing and meddlesome, he was just the man, when touched in his most vulnerable part, (his pride in his high-born Rosalba) to plan the destruction of one whose soaring intellect made him a dangerous rival of the mighty Ten.

It was night, and the Senator's gondola shot rapidly by the steps of the Ducal Palace, into the canal that separates it from the prisons of State, when, passing beneath the Bridge of Sighs, he stepped from his gondola into a black covered barge, in which six men, all clad in black, were seated, silent and motionless as statues on graves.

The night was dark, and the Count did not perceive that he was followed by a slight figure, dressed in the guise worn by the gipsey at the masquerade, who told Antonio that "the ways of love and politics are intricate, the steps of the Zuvalli Palace slippery, and the Lagoon deep."

As they waited at the door of the hall at the base of the Ducal Palace, a clanking of chains was heard, and without speaking a word, a man shrouded in a black cloak and fettered, was assisted into the barge, and a heavy bag was placed between his feet ; then swiftly and silently the barge was rowed until it reached the middle of the Lagoon. The prisoner, over whose features a black hood was drawn, had not moved since he had quietly taken the seat to which he was pointed on being assisted into the barge.

"Count Antonio Zuvalli," spoke the deep, hoarse voice of the Senator Gamba.

"I am he," was replied in a firm voice by the hooded prisoner.

"Men, bind on the weight, and unlock his fetters."

The cruel task was promptly executed.

"Now cast him into the Lagoon."

Raising him in their arms over the side of the barge, they let him fall heavily into the deep.

When the order to bind on the bag of sand was given, the gipsey bounded lightly to the barge's brink, and when Antonio fell the slight form sprang forward with a thrilling shriek, and clasping him in an undying embrace, sank with him, and both were lost to sight together.

"Was not that a woman's voice ?" asked the Senator, with deep emotion ; but the men seemed petrified, as, gazing on each other in wordless astonishment, none replied to his trembling inquiry. They had sunk back into their former silent places. When the haughty patrician again entered his gondola, and sped in trembling haste to his magnificent home, Rosalba was nowhere to be found, and the proud halls of the Gamba Palace soon echoed the unavailing groans of the childless Senator.

About a year after the above occurrence, a few selected friends were assembled at the Monti Palace to witness the marriage of Guillia Monti and Pietro Pisano. When the guests had all departed, Lady Villiers, standing on a balcony, in the clear moonlight, remarked to her brother-in-law, with a sigh, "It is just a year to-night since the gipsey fortune-teller, at the masque of the Moretti Palace, foretold to Antonio that 'The ways of love and politics are intricate, the steps of the Zuvalli Palace slippery, and the Lagoon deep.'"

### BLESSINGS OF A WELL SPENT LIFE.

"The world's a stage," was wisely said by one who had profoundly scrutinized its every phase and aspect. Life is a gilded phantom—its real purpose little understood, and still less cared about—it has an entrance and an exit, the interval being well filled with clamorous revelry that is not pleasure, with hopes that perish as we grasp them, with hates that are unfounded, and strife that leads to no result. A little while, and the drop curtain falls—the music dies among the glittering rafters of the roof, the lights are suddenly turned off, and darkness reigns where beauty flashed voluptuous glances, and silence broods where wit and song and brilliant repartee held carnival but an hour ago.

With all the fuss we make—with all the labor we endure, how few of us can recall the past and point to any real good our travail has effected ! Can we console our wasted spirits by the thought that they have not been spent in vain—that we have left behind us some noble act or fruitful word for which the future will be happier ? Blest beyond all comparison are those who can ; but if we look for them, it must not be among the noisy demi-gods of war, the clamorous crowds and heated demagogues, or the shrill victors of forensic eloquence. Our quest must be pursued in different latitudes ;—apart from elbowing turbulence and blatant ostentation ; in the quiet of the study and the workshop, in the painter's studio, the poet's bower, the hermit's cell, the chemist's laboratory—in *these* we may expect to find, if anywhere, those royal natures whose individual worth redeems the superficial folly of the race.

THE WIFE OF ALL WORK.—A matron—one of those perplexed and harassed mothers who daily desire their swarms of bairns "to run away from them"—thus unbosoms herself :—

I never dream'd of such a fate,
  When I, a lass was courted—
Wife, mother, nurse, sempstress, cook, housekeeper, chambermaid, laundress, dairy-woman, and scrub generally, doing the work of eight,
  For the sake of being supported !

BALTIMORE, April 9th, 1856.

MR. LEDGER : *Sir*—I wish you would answer me what I am going to ask you : If you had a wife, and she had a mother that would come to your house and make a disturbance with you, what would you do with her ? If there is any thing to pay, you will put the price under this article, and I will send it to you next week.
A FRIEND.

Under such circumstances, we would not allow the old lady to come to our house. There is "nothing to pay" for this bit of advice ; we always serve our subscribers gratuitously in such matters.

### THE TENDER PASSION.

FREDERICK, MD., April 1st, 1856.

MR LEDGER :—Glancing at a late number of one of your issues, I perceive that a lady correspondent has requested of you a definition of the *tender* passion—and right well and gallantly have you performed for her, this little service. So well, indeed, that it would seem almost superfluous and supererogatory, not to say officious, in a writer so humble as myself to attempt any improvement upon what *you* have already said—and said so well and gracefully. But if you and "Kate" will excuse the presumption *I* will take the liberty of calling up from the quiet cells of memory and rescuing from oblivion a few lines, which in my judgment present a clearer, more concise, and at the same time, a more comprehensive idea of "Love."

I herewith hand them to you—and if your judgment of their merit correspond with my own, you will confer a favor on a constant reader of your valuable and very agreeable paper by their insertion together with the accompanying note. They may not be displeasing to some of your readers—and "Kate" might like them as well as those which have, so recently, dropped in mellifluous distillations from the pure sweet flow of your own more vigorous pen.

I hope your fair correspondent may 'ere long, personally experience in all its depth and purity the truth, *the* intensified and burning reality of that divine sensation—which is so eloquently and tersely pre-figured in the lines which follow—and very soon be led to the altar by some lucky swain, a blushing and a blooming bride as a reward or solution to her *loving and lovely curiosity*.

"LOVE."

"Love is something so divine,
  Description would but make it less ;—
'Tis what we *know*, but can't define,
  'Tis what we feel but can't express."

V. E.

### AN OLD-TIME SCHOOL INSPECTOR.

Many years ago, Deacon Forbes was school commissioner in a certain township lying on the Hudson ; and by virtue of his position he had to inspect all candidates for the office of teacher of the town school. One day a young man presented himself for inspection, and the Deacon being in a state of readiness (that is, having his boots and coat off and his pipe lighted) at once proceeded to business.

"Young man," said he, "fust and foremost spell Massachusetts."

The candidate spelt the terrible word, while the Deacon attentively listened.

"Jest hold on," said he, after a little reflection, "till I call my daughter Joe Ann, and then spell it ag'in."

Joe Ann having made her appearance, the Deacon pointed the stem of his pipe at the candidate, and said laconically, "Spell."

Again the word was slowly and distinctly spelt.

"Was that right, Joe Ann ?" said the Deacon.

Joe Ann said it was right.

"Very well, then," said the Deacon ; "so fur, so good. Now, then, young man, what is your opinion of Thomas Jefferson ?"

"I think, sir," said the candidate, "that Thomas Jefferson is one of the greatest men that this country, or any other country ever produced."

"You *do* ?" said the Deacon. "That's enough. *You're* qualified to teach any school in the land. Joe Ann, write him out a certificate."

We fear that a large number of our school-teachers, in the present day, are allowed to "pass muster" on examinations equally as thorough and searching as that to which the Deacon subjected the young pedagogue who appeared before him.

### SOCRATES AND THE PHYSIOGNOMIST.

There is a double praise due to virtue, when it is lodged in a body that seems to have been prepared for the reception of vice ; in many such cases the soul and body do not seem to be fellows. Socrates was an extraordinary instance of this nature. There chanced to be a great physiognomist in his time at Athens, who had made strange discoveries of men's natural tempers and inclinations by their outward appearances. Socrates's disciples, that they might put this artist to the trial, carried him to their master, whom he had never seen before, and did not know he was then in company with him. After a short examination of his face, the physiognomist pronounced him the most lewd, libidinous, drunken old fellow that he had ever met with in his whole life ; upon which the disciples all burst out a-laughing, as thinking they had detected the falsehood and vanity of his art. But Socrates told them the principles of his art might be very true, notwithstanding his present mistake ; for that he himself was naturally inclined to those vices, but that he had conquered the strong dispositions he was born with, by the dictates of philosophy.

ENTERTAINMENT OF BOOKS.—By reading, a man does, as it were, antedate his life, and makes himself contemporary with the ages past. And this way of running up beyond one's real nativity is much better than Plato's pre-existence : because here a man knows something of the state, and is wiser for it ; which he is not in the other. In conversing with books, we may choose our company. The reader has, as it were, the spirit and essence in a narrow compass : like an heir, he is born rather than made rich, and comes into a stock of sense with little or no trouble of his own. However, to be constantly in the wheel, has neither pleasure nor improvement in it. A man may as well expect to grow stronger by always *eating*, as wiser by always *reading* : too much overcharges nature, and turns more into disease than nourishment. 'Tis thought and digestion which make books serviceable, and give health and vigor to the mind. Neither ought we to be too implicit or resigning to authorities, but to examine before we assent, and preserve our reason in its just liberties. To walk always upon crutches, is the way to lose the use of our limbs.

## APRIL VOICES.

BY WILLIE E. PABOR.

I.

It was the voice of a fountain fair
Borne on the wings of the mountain air;
And this was the sense of the liquid lay
Borne to my ears at the dawn of day:
"A little bird with a bright red breast,
Is gathering things to build a nest;
And one—so gay in a coat of blue,
Sits singing his song, the young hours through."

II.

It was the voice of the violet
Hardly unfolding its blue leaves yet:
And this was the sense of the floral lay
Borne to my ears at the close of day:—
"I heard when the steps of Spring came nigh,
I heard her tell of the bright blue sky
And came to see if the earth looked fair
And the song of birds upon the air."

III.

It was the voice of a streamlet free
Chaunting its motion right merrily,
And this was the sense of the ripling lay
Borne to my ears at the close of day;
"My fetters are loosed, I'm free once more
To kiss the sand on the sloping shore;
To dance along in my merry glee
And hail the sun as I seek the sea."

IV.

Wherever I went, go far or near
Musical voices fell on my ear;
And this was the sense of each roundelay
Borne to my ears through the hours of day:
"Ev'n as a bride at th' altar appears,
April is here with her smiles and tears;
With her sweet, soft winds from fragrant bowers
With her budding trees and blooming flowers.'

HARLEM, N. Y., April, 1856.

## NELLIE LONG;

OR,

## THE HUNCHBACK.

BY YULA.

### CHAPTER I.

"Patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest."
KING LEAR.

Yes, Nellie was a hunchback. A poor, deformed girl. Nature had apparently singled her out for misfortunes. Does it not seem that there are individuals who have sufferings and sorrows appointed to them beyond the common lot of mortals? Nellie was not only a cripple, but she had also to contend against poverty and want; but there was a gem in the poor, misshapen casket, a beautiful soul imprisoned in the miserable clay.

Nellie was the only child of a widow in humble circumstances, who supported herself and daughter by going out to work by the day. Nellie was fourteen years old, but so short in stature that she might have been taken for seven, but for the old, wan looking face, which seemed like that of a person much older. There was nothing beautiful about Nellie, except her eyes. *They* were glorious looking orbs, large, dark, from which a soul, a pure, free soul, not crippled, but endowed with rare talents, looked forth.

Nellie had manifested an ardent thirst for knowledge ever since she was very young. Unable to enjoy the active sports, so natural to childhood, she applied herself to books, with an energy uncommon in a young person. She had attended a public school as steadily as her poor health would admit, and by her gentle docility, and readiness to assist in their lessons the more indolent and unstudious of the scholars, she had won upon their kindness and affection, and they were induced to recompense her, in the only way that she wished reward, by lending her books.

In the long weary evenings, when they could afford a light, Nellie wandered in the delicious pages of Robinson Crusoe, and was bewildered with the enchanting tales of the Arabian Nights, and went with Gulliver upon his wonderful travels.

Can there ever be books published that will equal these? Will the matter-of-fact stories, written by excessively sensible people (at the present day) who abjure the whole fairy and giant race, and believe that only historical and matter-of-fact books are fit for the growing mind, will these give as much pleasure to the little men and women of the present generation, as the time-honored tales?

Must the imagination, that invests so many objects in the fields and woods and gardens, with peculiar interest, be restrained? Shall there be no fairies in buttercups, no wonderful pigmies in the meadows, who dine on mushroom tables, and drink from lily bells? No haunted dells, no Undines in the waterfalls? Must Young America be matter of fact, and read only the strictly true in this utilitarian age? Must they consider only, in looking at a waterfall, how many mills it would be available to turn, and at the meadows, with reference to how much they would be worth to the square acre, when covered with towns and villages?

Let us hope not, else what would become of our embryo poets, and future *raconteurs?*

Nellie studied too hard; the little wan face became paler, the thin hands more transparent. She was growing ill very fast. She was too weak to go out, and was missed in her accustomed place at school.

Mrs. Long, Nellie's mother, felt that she must consult a physcian, though she hardly ventured to incur the expense.

"She had a low nervous fever," he said, when he came, and had noted with professional accuracy all her symptoms. "Rest and quiet, he thought, would restore her."

She had both. Rather more of the latter, than she wished, for necessity compelled Mrs. Long to leave her sick daughter, subject only to the occasional looking in of a kind neighbor, while she went out to her days' work.

"Mamma," said little Amy Lee, as she tripped into her invalid mother's room, "I am so sorry."

"Sorry for what, Amy?"

"Poor Mrs. Long, Mamma. I went down into the kitchen, and there saw Mrs. Long rubbing away on the washboard, and the tears were rolling off from her cheeks, while she washed. I asked her what the matter was, and she said she was thinking of her daughter Nellie, who was sick, and whom she was obliged to leave alone, and when I asked her why she didn't stay at home, and take care of her, she said she had no money, and they would starve, unless she went out to work as usual; and she says Nellie reads a great deal, and that she is the best scholar in school, and that she is crippled, and can't run as I can, and oh! mamma, I'm so sorry for Nellie, and won't you let me go in the carriage, and carry her something nice, to-morrow?"

Mrs. Lee promised; and when Mrs. Long came for the price of her day's work, she made inquiries into her circumstances, and said she would render her needed assistance.

Amy went the next day to see Nellie, accompanied by a servant, with a large basket, which contained some delicacies for the invalid, and some groceries for Mrs. Long.

Nellie, as usual, was alone, half dozing, when the door softly opened, and her quick ear caught the rustling of silken drapery. Was it a fairy that she saw before her? or the beautiful incarnation of some of those wondrous creations of the Persian story teller?

Nellie rubbed her eyes. The beautiful vision did not leave her long in doubt.

"Poor Nellie! Your mamma, who works for us, told me all about you, and I have come to see how you are, and to bring you some nice food. Poor girl! how pale you look," and the little white hand smoothed back carressingly, the tangled locks from Nellie's fevered brow.

What a contrast in the children! The child of affluence, noble, erect, with an unconscious elegance in her bearing, and a face beautiful as an angel's, and the child of suffering and poverty, crippled, pale, and with a patient expression, which told of sorrows borne, and difficulties and troubles struggled with.

Amy's visit had given a new impulse to Nellie. She gradually grew stronger and better, and Amy, who seemed to look upon Nellie as a sort of *protege*, did not confine her kindness to one visit. She sent her some suitable clothing, and lent her many interesting books of her own.

### CHAPTER II.

Several years passed away; years, which brought the charming Amy onto the threshold of womanhood; years, which brought no added grace or beauty, to the poor hunchback. Yet she had not been idle, during this time. She had read and studied, with the avidity of a starving intellect.

She was going one day to a public library, where, through the efforts of a friendly person, she had been permitted to take books. A wretched looking dwarfed creature she was, wrapped in a faded shawl, and with a bonnet neat, but old fashioned.

It was just as the various schools were out; the boys freed from confinement, were full of spirits and mischief.

"Hurra! There goes old humpy," said one of a group of rude children, as Nellie passed slowly along. "I wonder if she would'nt be a good mark to throw a stone at," said another, as he aimed a small stone at her, without, however, meaning to hit her, as he afterwards affirmed.

It struck her head near the temple, and she fell senseless to the ground.

"Poor girl!" said a young man, compassionately, who was passing, and saw her fall. "I fear it has killed her. No! she is opening her eyes. Come here," and he beckoned to a hackney coach, passing. "I will take her to her home," and he lifted her in carefully.

"Can you tell me your name, and where you live, little girl," said he kindly, when she seemed to be again in possession of her senses.

A convulsive sob was her answer—"only a hunchback, only a hunchback. Oh God! must I always bear this?" she murmured.

"Poor child!" said he gently, "do not cry so. Tell me your name, and where you live."

"My name is Nellie Long, and I live in Sidney street, sir," she replied, as soon as she could speak. "Perhaps I could walk, and give you no further trouble."

"Never mind the trouble; I want to see you safe home, and I wish to be of some service to you, also. What book is that, you have there?" for Nellie still grasped the volume, which she was carrying to the library, when the accident occured. "Poems, by Henry W. Longfellow," he read, as he turned to the title page.

"Do you read such books as these?" said he, with surprise.

Nellie explained to him how very desolate and lonely her life would be, were it not for reading, which was her only enjoyment.

"I forget then," she pursued, while a sudden glow came to her pale cheek, and a new light sparkled in her eyes, "that I am an object to laugh and scoff at. It is possible for even a poor cripple to have an appreciative soul," said she, bitterly.

They reached the tenant house, in one room of which Mrs. Long lived. Nellie's protector followed her up the two pair of stairs, which led to her home; and there he heard from Mrs. Long and Nellie a recital of their story. His sympathies were warmly excited for the unfortunate cripple, and as he listened to her correct language, and natural eloquence, and watched her speaking eye, he could not but conjecture that God, in his mysterious providence, though he had denied to her that beauty of form and feature which all of Eve's daughters covet, had yet in a manner compensated her by the fine mind and talents with which she was endowed.

"Have you ever written?" he inquired of Nellie. "Perhaps you could write stories, and thus earn enough to make yourself more comfortable; and it would be such a pleasure to you, who are deprived of the usual enjoyments of youth. You might win a name to be proud of, perhaps."

Nellie acknowledged that she had written some, but never for publication. After some persuasion, she was induced to allow him to look over some of her verses.

He found that they evinced uncommon talent, and were much better than the ordinary newspaper trash. He promised to endeavor to obtain employment for Nellie, as contributor to a paper, immediately.

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James Cameron, who had so nobly assisted Nellie, was a young lawyer, from a highly respectable family, in New York. Heaven had vouchsafed him a rare blessing in a truly good mother.

There are many kind, affectionate mothers, but few who unite good sense to superior intelligence and tact, in guiding the tender minds entrusted to their care. James Cameron had proved himself not unworthy of such a mother. He had taken for his guiding principle in life the golden rule, and never omitted any opportunity for doing good, which presented itself—hence his kindness to Nellie.

His advice had implanted a new hope in Nellie's breast. She felt that she need be no longer a drone in the human hive. She, who had repined and felt that there was no work given her to do, might yet be a blessing to herself, and to others.

Before many days, James Cameron brought her the pleasant intelligence, that he had obtained employment for her, in writing for the "Evening Star," for which she would be paid a price which seemed to her ample.

She entered upon her new duties with an eager hope, destined however to disappointment. Over exertion brought on a brain fever, and she laid for days with the hand of the fever king burning on her brow. She raved wildly, while her poor mother watched day and night. Nellie was her darling, all she had in the world to love, and with a true mother's tenderness, she loved her better for the misfortunes which had been sent upon her.

Amy Lee, whom the world and society, of which she was a brilliant ornament, had failed to spoil, came often to visit Nellie, and sent her many little comforts. During one of her visits, while she was sitting by the side of the poor sufferer, James Cameron called. They met on the common ground of humanity to a suffering fellow-being.

Beautiful as was Amy, with all the adornments of wealth, which are as the brilliant setting to the jewel, there was yet something to admire besides mere physical beauty, and the intellectual polish that education has given. There was a moral loveliness, which far exceeded either.

Amy came often. So did James Cameron. Perhaps he called more frequently, after he ascertained that Amy was often at the side of the sufferer. Human motives are mixed, and it is sometimes almost impossible to separate from a generous action, the slight alloy of selfishness, which mingled with the prompting motive.

It was not strange, so fitted by nature (as they were) for each other, that they loved. It was the old story over again, of human love, which has been since the world began, and will be, while this globe exists; and mingled with their happiness in each other, was sorrow at Nellie's sad fate; for she was dying. They mourned the sudden departure of one who gave promise of being at some future time a bright and shining light in the literary firmament.

It was a summer's afternoon, just at sunset. The fever had left Nellie, and she was in full possession of her reasoning faculties. There was a strange look in the little wan face—a look that it had never worn before, and which comes but once to each of us. It was the signet that death places upon his victims, the seal that there is no longer a reprieve of life.

By the side of the bed sat Amy and James. They wished to see the last of their humble friend, and smoothe, by their kindness, her rough way down the dark valley of the shadow of death.

"Open the window, mother, dear, and let me see the blue sky once more," said Nellie, faintly.

A flood of golden light, the last rays of the setting sun, illumined the room, as Mrs. Long opened the shutters.

"Oh, mother, I see there my eternal home!" said Nellie. "There are no cripples there, no poverty, no want."

Nellie's eyes closed to open no more, but on her face still lingered a smile, as if her parting spirit had caught a glimpse of the glories of a better world.

"For so he giveth his beloved sleep," said Mr. Cameron, as he gazed at the placid face before him, and turned to offer what consolation he could to the bereaved mother.

The grass had not grown on Nellie's grave, when James Cameron whispered his hopes and wishes in Amy's willing ear; and she, who had witnessed his kindness to a stranger, felt that she would be running no risk in entrusting her happiness to his keeping.

Nor did she ever have cause to repent her choice. He, who had been a good son, could hardly fail of making an excellent husband; and Amy's life, as the cherished wife of James Cameron, passed in tranquillity and happiness.

## AN UNNATURAL PARENT.

BALTIMORE, April 7, 1856.

MR. LEDGER:—Some nine years since I married against my father's consent, and he has never forgiven me, though my marriage has resulted most happily in every other respect. My wife has come in possession of great wealth in her own right, my affairs have prospered, our children are all that we could wish, my mother sympathizes with me, but my father remains inexorable. On one occasion I was dangerously ill, and thinking I was about to die, I sent for him, but he refused to come and see me. My letters he always returns unopened, and will not even see any of his grandchildren. This unrelenting disapprobation on the part of my father occasions me great unhappiness, and is the one plague spot of my existence. Can you advise me what to do, in order to put an end to this unfortunate state of things?

Truly yours, R. W. S.

It is difficult to imagine anything more odious than the exhibition of such an unforgiving disposition on the part of a parent, towards one whom he should love and cherish, and before whom he should set an example of Christian meekness and charity. How can such a parent pray for forgiveness of his own sins, to that beneficent Father who has imposed upon every petitioner for his grace, the condition of a prior forgiveness of all offences against themselves? The only advice we can give our correspondent is, to satisfy his own conscience in the matter, and cease to grieve at the selfish obstinacy of one who seems as unworthy of the love of a son as he has shown himself incapable of appreciating it.

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"JOSEPH" informs us that he has recently discovered his inamorata to be fond of another gentleman, on whom she bestows a modicum of her affections. Our correspondent requires our advice and assistance. We really do not see how we can aid him. The circumstance he relates is one of the most common occurrence. Perhaps the lady only pretends to be fond of some one else—time will show.

## UNEQUAL MARRIAGES.

### JACK MASSINGBRED AND KATE HENDERSON.

"I told you, rather," broke he in, "that I wished to put that feeling to the last test, by linking your fortune with my own forever."

"Very well, I accept that version. You offered to make me your wife, and in return, I asked you to retract your words—to suffer our relations to continue on their old footing, nor subject me to the necessity of an explanation painful to both of us. For a while you consented, now, you seem impatient of your concession, and ask me to resume the subject. Be it so—but for the last time."

Massingbred's cheeks grew deadly pale, but he never uttered a word. After a second's pause, she resumed:

"Your affections are less engaged in this case than you think. You would make me your wife just as you would do to anything else that gave a bold defiance to the world, to show a consciousness of your own power, to break down any obstacle, and make the prejudices or opinions of society give way before you. You have energy and self-esteem enough to make this succeed. Your wife—albeit the steward's daughter—the governess! would be received, invited, visited, and the rest of it; and so far as you were concerned, the triumph would be complete. Now, however, turn a little attention to the other side of the medal. What is to requite me for all this courtesy on sufferance—all this mockery of consideration? Where am I to find my friendships—where even discover my duties? You only know one kind of pride, that of station and social eminence. I can tell you there is another, loftier far—the consciousness that no inequality of position can obliterate what I feel and know in myself of superiority to those fine ladies, whose favorable notice you would entreat for me. Smile at the vanity of this declaration if you like, sir, but at least own that I am consistent, for I am prouder in the independence of my present dependence than I should be in all the state of Mr. Massingbred's wife. You can see, therefore, that I could not accept this change as the great elevation you would deem it. You would be stooping to raise one who could never persuade herself that she was exalted. I am well aware that inequality of one sort or another is the condition of most marriages. The rank of one compensates for the wealth of the other. Here, it is affluence and age, there, it is beauty and poverty. People treat the question in a good commercial spirit, and balance the profit and loss like tradesfolk; but even in this sense our compact would be impossible, since you would endow me with what has no value in my eyes, and I, worse off still, have absolutely nothing to give in return."

"Give me your love, dearest Kate," cried he, "and supported by that, you shall see that I deserve it. Believe me, it is your own proud spirit that exaggerates the difficulties that would await us in society."

"I should scorn myself if I thought of them," broke she in, haughtily; "and remember, sir, these are not the words of one who speaks in ignorance. I, too, have seen that great world, on which your affections are so fixed. I have mixed with it, and know it. Notwithstanding all the cant of moralists, I do not believe it to be more hollow or more heartless than other classes. Its great besetting sin is not of self-growth, for it comes of the slavish adulation offered by those beneath it, the groveling worship of the would-be fine folk, who would leave friends, and home, and hearth, to be admitted even to the antechambers of the great. They who offer up this incense are, in my eyes, far more despicable than they who accept the sacrifice; but I would not cast my lot with either. Do not smile, sir, as if these were high-flown sentiments; they are the veriest common-places of one who loves common-place, who neither seeks affections with coronets nor friendships in gold coaches, but who would still less be of that herd—mute, astonished, and awe-struck—who worship them!"

"You deem me, then, deficient in this same independence of spirit?" cried Massingbred, half indignantly.

"I certainly do not accept your intention of marrying beneath you as the proof of it. Must I again tell you, sir, that, in such cases, it is the poor, weak, patient, forgotten woman that pays all the penalty, and that, in the very conflict with the world, the man has his reward?"

"If you loved me, Kate," said he, in a tone of deep sorrow, "it is not thus you would discuss this question."

She made no reply, but bending down lower over her drawing, worked away with increased rapidity.

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THE COLD WATER CURE.—Preissnitz, the Austrian who acquired such celebrity as the originator of the cold water cure, was not a medical practitioner. He cured some, no doubt, but we believe, killed many more than he cured. The cold bath is by no means a new remedial agent; it had been known and used in certain cases hundreds of years before the time of Preissnitz.

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COSTLY SPORT.—Fox-hunting is considered glorious sport, but look at the expense! The Duke of Rutland, who is great authority in such matters, estimates the cost of a good pack of hounds at from $5,000 to $6,000, and the expense of keeping up a fox-hunting establishment (keep of horses and hounds, huntsmen, &c.) at $12,000 a year.

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TRUE GREATNESS.—It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own. But the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of his character.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

## GOD SAVE THE POOR.

A narrow street, heaped with snow and ashes, at least six feet deep in the middle; a narrower side-walk, with small, rough, sloppy flagstones; a steep flight of stairs down into a cellar, an apartment under ground, not more than sixteen feet square and seven feet high, dark, filthy, smoky; a suffocating atmosphere, loaded with nauseating and sickening odors; a few cinders burning dimly on a hearth; a circle of ragged, dirty men, women and children round the fire, smoking, drinking beer, now whistling, now joining in some song, now cursing and swearing, now laughing, now a child whining, again quarrels, and oaths, and blows; a small, dusty window, with a ray or two of the declining sun beaming in on a heap of straw, a miserable bed, and the swarthy face of a young Italian organ-player—such is the scene.

It is the afternoon of January 1st, 1856. The sun is looking for the last time on the death-like countenance of the young musician; and he looks for the last time on the setting sun. His face is damp and pallid, and care-worn and sorrowful; the unwholesome moisture of the grave is on his brow; his eye is sunken and glittering; his breath comes and goes by starts; his chest heaves and falls, falls and heaves quickly beneath his bony hands; his hand-organ sits between him and the window; his eyes turn longingly towards it; for an instant he ceases to breathe, as he musters all his strength to stretch his hand to its handle; his hand rests on the desired spot; and he pauses to breathe again. Once he turns the handle, but the music is feeble, and its sound dies away unheeded by all save himself—*his* eye sparkles with pleasure.

"Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
A merry old soul was he;
Oh, give him his pipe, and give him his bowl,
And who so merry as he?"

The Italian heard not the song, shouted by the circle round the fire; his ear was with his heart,—in his own instrument; he longed to hear *its* music. Panting, he turns the handle again; the tones are low, gentle, soft, melancholy, and his heart beats quicker with joy. His lips move; he attempts to sing the strains he had learnt in childhood from his mother; his mind wanders back to his home far away in the sunny plains of Italy, where the long shadows of the mighty Alps stretch over hamlets and villages, valleys and hills; his mind wanders back to the shadowy days of childhood, calm evenings, glorious sunsets, and the sports of his comrades. He strives to utter the musical words of his native language, but the cellar would not echo the notes that used to charm so well on the green before his mother's cottage.

The harsh voices of his companions grate on his ear; he looks up towards the sunlight and pauses to breathe.

Now the shrill tones of childhood mingle in the chorus:

We won't go home till morning,
We won't go home till morning,
And we won't go home till morning,
Till daylight doth appear.

Again the soft notes of the dying one break in quietly. Will they not pause and listen? Will they not let him depart in peace?

One sings:

"Carry me back to ole Virginny,
To ole Virginny once more."

A childish voice replies:

"Ole Dan Tucker
You'll be too late to get your supper."

A mischievous urchin touches, as if accidentally, the elbow of his mother's arm raised to her head with a jug of beer; she curses the boy for spilling the liquor on her lap; and the whole circle laugh at the joke. Ha! ha! ha!

Hush! Hark, the soft voice of the Italian fills up the breaks and pauses in the uproar! He is in Italy: he sees the sun going down beyond the white summits of the Alps; the breath of evening fans his cheeks; the songs of his playmates are ringing in his ears; he feels the warm pressure of his sister's hand; he sees the smiles that light his mother's face, as she sits beneath the clustering vine beside her cottage door;—and then comes his father from the village, swinging in his hand a present for his boy. "Padre," he whispers; his face is covered with smiles, and with his brothers and sisters he strives to welcome his father in a song. His mother's voice rings in his ears as she joins in the simple melody. The beauties of heaven and earth fill his eyes; the glories of an Italian sunset dance before him; the joys of childhood well up from the bottom of his heart.

Hark again, one—two—three—four—five—six; the fire bell rings.

Hurrah! fire! fire! There is a rush up stairs, and the dying stranger is alone.

His hand drops on the handle of his loved instrument: his lips quiver—then become still—his eyes grow larger and brighter:—a thin, cloudy dimness passes over them—motionless, they stare at the dying sunlight—there is a long, long sighing moan—and where is he?

God save the poor!

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TRENTON, N. J., April 9, 1856.

MR. LEDGER:—Can a person thoroughly master the German language in six months, by studying twelve hours a day, for that length of time? Which do you think is the more valuable language for a young American, the German or the French?

Yours truly, LINGUA.

Our answer to Lingua's first question is—No. We would also suggest that nobody can study *twelve hours a day* to advantage. If Lingua would study six hours a day and saw wood the other six, he would make greater progress in his German than by studying it twelve hours *per diem*. In reply to our correspondent's second question, we would say that a positive answer is impossible. It will depend altogether on circumstances whether a knowledge of the French or German language will be the more valuable to any person. Before, however, he studies either the French or German language, we would advise him to master the "King's Ehglish."

### COLUMBUS.

BY MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

A student mused in cloister'd cell,—
The midnight lamp declined,—
While visions of a vestal sphere
Enwrapt his ardent mind.

At length, by mighty impulse moved,
Decision sprang from thought;
And strong in eloquence of soul,
The Genoise besought

Of lofty Science,—"Send me forth
O'er yonder trackless sea,
And glorious themes for deathless tomes,
I will bring back to thee;

I'll win such undiscover'd fields,
Such trophies of renown,—
That all thy harvests heretofore,
Shall be as thistle-down."

But Science stood with folded arms,
In statued, sceptic pride,
And like the Pharisees of old,
Unvarnish'd truth decried.

He said to Commerce,—"Give me ships,
And I the cost will pay,
New mines of gold, and Indian gems
Shall sparkle to the day."

But Commerce launch'd her clumsy boats
That fear'd to leave the shore,
And sternly bade the dreamer,—hence,—
To waste her time no more.

He turn'd to Royalty, and cried
"Deign then to speed my way,
And realms and nations yet unknown
Shall bow and own thy sway."

But the anointed kings were bent,
In conflicts of an hour,
And chose in petty broils to spend
Their heaven-entrusted power.

Then to the Church, Columbus knelt,—
"Oh Mother!—bless thy son,—
And send him with a viceroy's right,
Where heathen souls are won,—

And incense from a thousand shrines
Shall on your altars glow,
And chaunted praise from pagan tongues
Thy temple-courts o'erflow."

So, the tiara'd Church gave ear
When her true suppliant pray'd,
And Isabella's sceptred hand
Its warm oblation made;

And gaily from the coast of Spain
Three white sails met the morn,—
Westward, they steered 'neath stranger-skies
Till to grey Europe's wondering eyes
This brave, New World was born.

HARTFORD, Conn., April, 1856.

# THE DIAMOND SPRAY.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

### CHAPTER I.

Alas! she had but little care
For any bliss of future hours!
That parting made the world all dim
To her, whichever way she saw.

* * * * * * * *

And months are gone, or fast or slow,
And many a love has had its making—
Since these two parted, at the breaking
Of daylight, whiter than the snow.
ALICE CAREY.

"Are you ready, Angela?" said Mrs. Branfert, as she rapped at the door of her daughter's dressing-room. "Your father is growing fidgetty, and I think myself we shall be most fashionably late."

"One moment, dear mamma, and I will join you in the drawing-room," said the young girl within, who was eagerly tearing open a billet-doux, just handed her by her dressing-maid, who held a small pearl box in her hand. The worthy mother went back to console the testy old gentleman, who was strolling up and down the dining-room, and grumbling, in no measured terms, over the folly of women who were never ready, and the daughter read:

"DEAREST ANGELA—You gave me no answer this morning. Was it because your mother entered? I hoped for a look or smile in spite of her coming. But if you indeed love me—if I may hope to call you mine at some future day—wear the little trifle I send to my mother's party to-night. It is unworthy your beauty, but even so poor a gift will serve to show that I may love you. PAUL ROSSITER."

She pressed the letter to her lips, and said, eagerly:

"The casket, Lucy—the casket."

The girl placed it before her, open, and her eyes fell upon a delicate spray of diamonds of the purest water. With a little cry of delight, she placed it with trembling fingers in her hair, and throwing the hood of her fur cloak over her head, that the new ornament might not rouse her mother's curiosity, glided down the stairs.

The mother glanced approvingly over her tasteful dress; her father grumbled out a sarcastic hope that she had not hurried herself too much, for which piece of impertinence the petted belle gave him a playful kiss, and entering the carriage, they were driven to the house of Mrs. Rossiter.

Late as it was, there were still many in the cloak-room when they entered, and Angela, impatient to join her lover and see his face brighten as he saw the tacit sign of acceptance, took but a passing glance at the mirror, and hurried her mother on to the brilliantly-lighted rooms.

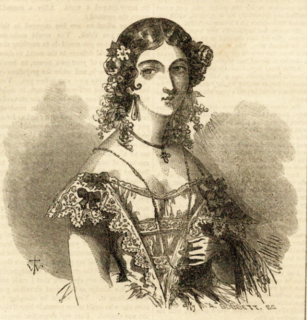
The pretty Angela was a belle—a light-hearted and amiable one, unspoiled by pride or affectation, and it was not strange that she should be surrounded by a crowd of admirers when her respects had been paid to her hostess. But Paul was not among them, and though she heard his gay laugh in the room beyond, she could not see his face.

"Surely he must have heard us announced," she thought to herself, and as the minutes flew by without his making his bow before her, she felt grieved and wounded. Her eyes sparkled, her color rose, and she half determined to be very cool and distant when he did come, to punish him for his neglect. At that moment a gentleman approached her, and said playfully:

"You look serious, Miss Branfert. Shall I play monk to your nun, or do you still retain enough affection for the world, to bestow this fair hand upon me for a waltz?"

"Oh, I won't be a nun," was her smiling reply. "But I will waltz with pleasure. There is my favorite—the Prima Donna. It is a wonder to me how any one can sit still with such music in their ears," and yielding her slight form to the clasp of her companion, the two went sweeping in easy and graceful circles around the room.

Meanwhile Paul, in the music room, surrounded by a laughing circle, was straining ear and eye in vain, to win some token of her coming. He had not heard the party announced, and growing weary of suspense, at last, he sauntered to the saloon, and looked in upon the dancers. Just then Angela whirled past, her white hand resting on her companion's shoulder, her cheeks flushed, and her blue eyes raised to his with a smile of pleasure. She did not see him there among the crowd, and biting his lip, he followed the couple to the opposite side of the room. They left the circle; they sat down, and Vernet leaned over his fair partner, and fanned her assiduously, while the words he murmured in her ear made her smile, and blush, and look most provokingly beautiful. Paul longed to throw him down the stairs, but he restrained his impatience, and approached the seat. Angela looked up as he drew near; a blush and a shy, happy smile were just flitting over her face, as he fixed his eyes earnestly on her drooping curls, when he started back, turned a little pale, and then addressed her with the most chilling courtesy.


W. A. BOBBETT, SC.

THE BEAUTIFUL ANGELA—SEE STORY OF "DIAMOND SPRAY," ON THIS PAGE.

What could it mean? Had he won this token of her regard only to smile at her folly, and punish it by his cool civility? Dreadful as the suspicion was, she was forced to credit it, and after the first shock of surprise was over, her woman's pride rose to her aid. She answered his quiet greeting as quietly, smiled enchantingly at Vernet, who gave up his seat to the new-comer, and turned to Paul with an air of quiet, self-possession, as he uttered a few common-places that quite deceived him.

The waltz had again commenced, and she sat with an aching heart, looking upon the flying forms, when Paul said, mechanically:

"May I have the honor?" and took her hand in his without waiting for her reply. She could not withdraw it from the burning grasp; his arm was around her waist, and his breath upon her cheek, and she felt as if she could have died in the dear embrace. Only once did she venture to look up into his face. It was cold and pale, and his dark eyes were fixed upon her, as if he would read her very soul. She shrank from the glance, and murmured feebly:

"The room is whirling; I do not feel quite well. I believe I will go to my mother."

Without a word he drew her from the saloon, offered his arm, and led her to Mrs. Branfert, who, frightened at her pallor, hurried her off to the cloak-room, and sent him for the carriage. He folded her cloak around her, and led her down the stairs; he lingered a moment at the carriage window while Mrs. Branfert was looking for her husband, and grasping her hand, said, hurriedly:

"Angela, I leave the city to-night. To-morrow morning I shall be on my way to Europe. But think of me sometimes. God bless you! Good-bye!"

He raised her hand to his lips; she felt a hot tear fall upon it. But before she could speak he was gone, her parents entered, and the carriage was rolling swiftly towards home.

The petted child clung to her mother in that first deep grief, and though she could not tell the secret, she wept upon her bosom until she was calm, and fell asleep in her arms at last, as she had done when a little child.

A slight accident explained all, the next day. Her maid, in putting her young mistress's opera cloak away, saw something glisten in the silken lining, and taking it to Angela, found the *diamond spray*, which had caught there as she threw the cloak aside, before going into the ball-room.

She had not worn it. Paul fancied himself rejected, when he was only loved too well, and now the ocean was between them, and it was too late to call the wanderer back.

### CHAPTER II.

And they have met; the eyes so sweet
In the old time, again she sees,
Hears the same voice. ALICE CAREY.

Would all watches maidens keep,
When they sit alone and weep,
For their heart aches, ended so! IBID.

Two years afterward, Paul Rossiter sat in the coffee-room of his hotel in London, and read the following letter from his mother:

"MY DEAR BOY:—I am so rejoiced to hear you are so near home. You must positively be with us the first of next month. Write me when you sail, as I wish to get up a little *fete* for your return. I shall take care to have all your friends here to meet you, and have already sent my diamonds to be reset. You know you always used to say diamonds became me. And, by the way, don't forget the lace you promised me. I hope you succeeded in smuggling it safely. Did you put it in the lining of your hat as I advised?

"Your father is well, and anxious to see you. So are all your old associates. Vernet, to whom you took such a dislike, has married Helen Glenn, and gone South to live on her plantation. Your quondam lady-love, Miss Branfert, is still single, but a terrible flirt. She laughs about it herself, and acknowledges with perfect candor that she has no heart. I used to hope she might be my daughter, but have seen my mistake. Your cousin Georgietta will defer her wedding till you come; that is, if you make your appearance at any reasonable time.

"We have plenty of news here, but I mean you shall come and get them yourself. You will bring me the latest fashions, of course. Also, some of Gourmet's cream paste; that I use is not genuine, I believe. Don't forget these commissions, or the lace, or to be here in time for the *fete*, unless you wish to break the heart of your affectionate mother.
CLARA ROSSITER."

He mused a moment over the note, and then going to the desk wrote briefly,

"If no accident happens to delay me, I will be with you at the time you have appointed, my dear mother.
PAUL."

and sent his letter by the steamer of that day. In little over a week he was following in its track, and on the night of the *fete* he reached his father's house. The parlors were lighted brilliantly, the band in their places in the saloon, the well drilled servants at their posts, waiting the arrival of the expected guests, when he sprung from the carriage, and dashed through the hall and up the stairs to his mother's room. The servant at the door, struck dumb by the apparition of a bronzed and bearded man flying past him, stood looking on in mute astonishment, but his mother coming down from her dressing room, glittering in satin and diamonds, recognized her truant, and the next moment he was clasped to her heart.

"How dark you have grown, and how very becoming that picteresque style of beard and long hair is to you," she exclaimed, as she released him from that long embrace. "Go to your room my son, you will find everything ready for you; when you have made your toilet join me in the rooms below."

She kissed him again, and glided down the stairs. He gazed after her with pride and tenderness.

"Paul, my boy," said a deep voice behind him, and turning, he saw his gray haired father. Paul was yet impulsive and affectionate as a boy, and with a rush of childhood memories thronging to his soul, he threw his arms around that stately neck, and kissed the high forehead and silver hairs with tears of happiness. Then pressing his lips to the cheek of his fair cousin Georgietta he followed his servant to his own room.

A crowd of eager friends flocked around him, when he stood again by his mother's side, warm hands grasped his, and bright eyes beamed out their greeting till he laughingly announced his intention of leaving the country again upon the following day that he might receive another welcome quite as warm on his second return. But though he seemed gay and light at heart, his eye turned often to the door, for Angela was not there.

It was very late when a buzz of admiration heralded a new entrance; glancing towards the door he saw Angela leaning on her father's arm, while her mother followed with her oldest son Lionel. He looked once more upon that perfect face and found it only still more lovely. She had grown taller and more elegantly proportioned, her manner was now stately and reserved, and her smile not quite so joyous and sincere, but the blue eyes were still as bright, the forehead still as smooth and fair, and the oval cheek as delicately tinted as when he had first known and loved her.

He answered the greetings of her party with cordial ease, but when she spoke, when those blue eyes were lifted to his face, and the small white hand laid in his, he faltered, stammered, and was as confused as a bashful schoolboy. Suddenly he saw among the thick brown curls that still waved around her face, *the diamond spray*, and a wild hope thrilled through his heart. Pale and breathless, he clasped her hand closely in his—she smiled a sweet shy smile—and with some passing compliment, moved away.

It was enough! She could not be wholly indifferent to him or she would never have worn the significant token! And with this glad thought he mingled again in the crowd, catching now and then, a glance from her sweet eyes, and longing impatiently for the time to come when this seeming mystery should be explained.

Fortune, satisfied with his two years of probation, now favored him. He led Angela down to supper and secured her for his partner in the dance afterward. But when "the Gemman" began he drew her from the saloon, and into the conservatory, now silent and deserted but fragrant with the odor of a thousand flowers.

They paused before a splendid catalpa, both feeling, instinctively, that the moment which should decide their future fates, had come. He took her two hands in his, he pressed them feverishly to his lips, and said, passionately:

"Angela, two years ago you sent me from my home and friends. To-night you wear my token, have you forgotten what it means? I told you then how I loved you, but oh it was not half so well as I love you now! Can you love me, do you love me, Angela?"

"It was a mistake," she faltered, "a cruel mistake. I meant to wear the token then, Paul, as I wear it now, but I lost it in the cloak room and only found it after it was too late."

"You loved me then, Angela?" he said, with a sudden burst of joy.

"Then, and now, and always," was her low reply, and she was clasped closely to a strongly beating heart.

So ends my story. But Paul Rossiter is again making arrangements for a tour through Europe. This time, he will not be alone, but Angela, going from the altar with him, will begin life's journey by his side upon the open sea. And Mrs. Rossiter who once thought her "a terrible flirt" is wild with joy at the match, and because she is to make one of the party on the bridal journey, more especially as she pleases herself with the idea of "smuggling" an unlimited amount of frippery over the frontier.

### HELP THE NEEDY.

BATON ROUGE, March 27th, 1856.

MR LEDGER:—In nearly every number of your paper I notice something is said touching the condition of the poor. I like to see this, as far as it goes, yet while you hold out gloomy and forbidding pictures of poverty and distress in our crowded cities, would it not be well to digest a plan adequate to relieve the many thousands of "destitute poor" which you say are in New York; and the many more which it is reasonable to suppose are in other cities? You say that there are 50,000 destitute poor now in the city of New York. And that there are tens of thousands of men and women in that city without means and employment. This fact, sir, is an absolute shame—a disgrace to humanity. Can the philanthropists of that great city suffer such things to exist without making an effort to wipe out the stain.

Why don't your pious ministers of the Gospel, who are luxuriating in the sunshine of wealth and proclaiming the "Truth" beneath robes the cost of which would purchase several happy homes for the poor out in "the far west," form associations for controlling and directing this dormant energy in enterprises which would result in giving comfortable homes to unfortunate thousands? Last summer I visited the Western Territories. I travelled over thousands of acres of the fairest and richest land my eye ever beheld; but the trace of civilization was not to be seen upon it. It was a vast wilderness, the natural resources of which, were far richer than any of the settled parts of the States. When I reflected on the condition of the poor in our cities; of the energy they could bring to bear in developing so fine a country; of their susceptibility to arrive to a high degree of earthly happiness; of the many beautiful homes they might occupy in this "Western Wiiderness," the resources of which must remain undeveloped till some magnanimous spirits possessing wealth and influence shall take hold of this class and direct it by some well organized plan to this land replete with riches. I felt disgusted with my race; not on account of the prospect that was before me, but because the stupidity of men delayed the day of realization. Send your poor out West, prepared with mechanical and agricultural implements to bring into activity and life the wide fields they may occupy. Yes, send them out and they will soon have homes and be happy.

I am most respectfully,
A SUBSCRIBER.

Our far-off correspondent, whose zeal in the cause of suffering humanity deserves much commendation, seems to be unaware of the fact that there is more money annually donated in New York for philanthropic purposes, than in any other city of its size in the world. We have Asylums for the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, and the Insane; hospitals for all classes of the sick; Magdalen Asylums, Sailors Homes, Houses of Refuge, Woman's Hospitals, Houses of Industry, and Ladies Home Missions, without number. One society sends out on an average one hundred poor orphan children a month to the West, where homes have been previously provided for them, in respectable families. Beside, that worthy class which our correspondent refers to as "your pious ministers of the Gospel, who are luxuriating in the sunshine of wealth and proclaiming the 'Truth' beneath robes the cost of which would purchase several happy homes" &c.,—these very gentlemen are constantly laboring in the cause of humanity, and oftimes give not only their toil but their money to relieve the necessities of the needy. We are all trying to do what we can here, for the relief of our suffering poor. Our efforts, though humble, are earnest and sincere, and we always gladly welcome aid from other sources. If our correspondent will send us a few thousand dollars for the purpose of practically carrying out his admirable suggestions, we will see that the donation is well applied.

### A WOMAN'S FRIENDLY HINT.

MR. LEDGER:—I have observed several letters in your columns, from husbands who complain of their wives going to balls with other gentlemen, and kissing their male relatives with enthusiasm, of their buying a superfluity of dresses, and many similar grievances, and asking you for advice and consolation—which you always seem very glad to give them. Now, sir, suppose you incline your ear to me—a *woman*, a *wife*, a *mother*. *I* shall tell you a different story. *I* shall speak of cigar smoke from cellar to garret, of tobacco spittle on every carpet, of ghosts of "gin slings" and "sherry cobblers" haunting the air of every room, of coming home drunk at two o'clock in the morning, of lounging in billiard rooms, liquor saloons and tenpin alleys, of target excursions, of fast horses on the avenue, of ——, of a thousand such things. What do you say to all that? Where are your sympathies *now*? That's the sort of home and husband *I* have; and thousands of women have the same kind.

You men uphold one another in your meanness; you make the laws, and publish the newspapers; you pat each other on the back, and make a fuss over each other's humbug, fiddle-faddle "trials"—heaven save the mark—until you really imagine that your wives are monsters, and treat them accordingly.

A stop must be put to this sort of thing. You men must be waked up to your true condition, and be made to see what you *really* are. I could ask no worse punishment upon you; I seek no sweeter revenge.

Now, MR. LEDGER, will you stop this encouraging men to complain publicly of their wives? It's a crying shame. By and bye they will be giving the names right out in full. I guess you would not like to have a dozen or two enraged females pouncing on you and upsetting your types some morning before breakfast! Well, then, you just look out, and take my hint, if you know which side your bread is buttered. For one, I've seen just about as much of that sort of stuff as I can bear, and I'm beginning to let my nails grow. I wish the LEDGER well, and I don't want to injure *anybody*, but I'm human, and there's no knowing what I *might* be driven to. Yours truly,
LUCINDA.

### ROCK-A-BYE-BABYISMS.

Louis Napoleon decreed that for all children born in France on the same day as his own and Eugenie's child, he would stand as godfather, the Empress as godmother. The average number of legitimate daily births in France is no less than 2,500; of which the usual proportion is 1285 boys to 1215 girls. Of these imperial god-children, all the boys are to be named LOUIS-EUGENE and the girls EUGENIE-LOUISE.

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Some of the bachelor diplomatists who have called on "the baby," have made characteristic and ludicrous mistakes. A company of them on arriving near the little joker's audience chamber came upon a nurse who was carrying a child in her arms, which began jumping and clapping its hands, and crying "goo—goo." A circle was at once formed, and the bachelors indulged in many sage reflections upon the extraordinary size, vigor, intelligence and sprightliness of the two-days-old infant. To their great chagrin, however, the Grand Chamberlain, on coming up, informed them that they had been admiring the child of the head nurse, and that it was *two months old!*

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The old nursery tune of "Rock-a-bye-baby" is the only one now allowed to be hummed or whistled in the streets of Paris.

### ART.

The exhibition of paintings, at present open in this city, is attracting a large share of public attention. Those who visit it will certainly be repaid for their trouble and expense by the pleasure which every one must derive from an examination of the beautiful pictures it contains. Love of the beautiful, a feeling common to all mankind, requires cultivation, and for strengthening this love and directing it in the right channel, such exhibitions are of the utmost importance and highest value. What a pity that only a few can enjoy them!

The best substitute we can offer those who cannot visit the exhibition is a copy of the NEW YORK LEDGER; its clear, good type, the neat arrangement of its articles, its beautiful illustrations are expressly designed to appeal to the feelings and to cultivate the taste of its readers.

NEWSDEALERS.—We are glad to learn that newsdealers fully appreciate the services of the LEDGER in their behalf. Some of them acknowledge that the immense advertising of our paper, and the publication of the commencement of our continued stories in the leading daily journals, whereby hundreds of persons are led for the *first* time to visit their stores to purchase the LEDGER, have very greatly increased the number of their general customers, because, when people get in the habit of visiting a news-room for the purpose of buying a particular paper, they will of course see other papers, and will gradually extend their custom to them, thereby increasing the newsman's business. In some cases, so great has been this increase, that the business of many news-rooms has nearly doubled, within the last five months.

It is our intention to make still greater efforts in this direction, and if our friends, the newsdealers, will vigorously second our exertions, they will, of course, vastly benefit themselves, as well as help us.